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**T.I. Vorontsova**
Т.И.Воронцова

# Reading and Discussing Essays

## Эссе для чтения и дискуссий

***Учебное пособие по аналитическому чтению для 4-го курса на материале жанра эссе***

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**Составитель:** д-р. филол. наук, доц. Т.И. Воронцова
**Научный редактор** д-р.пед. наук, проф. Н.В. Баграмова
**Рецензент** канд. филол. наук, доц. С.А. Панчук

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Учебное пособие предназначено для студентов 4 курса бакалавриата английского отделения института иностранных языков. Цели учебного пособия: ознакомление студентов с историей становления и развития жанра эссе, который является неотъемлемой частью английской и американской культуры; развитие навыков интерпретации художественного текста на материале текстов эссе английских и американских авторов.

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## Contents

# INTRODUCTION

Essay is a short piece of writing giving someone's ideas about politics, society etc. It is usually spoken of as a peculiar English thing, but in its origin it is associated with the name of M. Montaigne (1533-1592), a famous French writer, who published two books of essays in 1580.

The essay is a literary composition of moderate length on philosophical, social, aesthetic or literary subjects. It never goes deep into the subject, but merely touches upon the surface. This literary form was very popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 17th century essays were written on topics connected with morals and ethics, in the 18th century – on philosophical and political topics. In the 19th century the essay acquired the features of the journalistic article which covers all kinds of subjects (Galperin, 1977: 293).

By tradition essays have been categorized as formal and informal; yet it can be argued that all essays are an expression of the human voice addressing an imagined audience, seeking to shift opinion, to influence judgment. Even the most artfully composed essay suggests naturalness of discourse. For all their diversity, essays fall into three general types: those that present opinions primarily, and have been written to "instruct"; those that impart information and knowledge; and those that record personal experiences, especially memories. The essay of opinion was for centuries a quintessential essay (Oates, 2000: 22). According to another classification essays can be divided into the following types: observations, which include proverbs, maxims, aphorisms; these have been called "the basis of the essay"; the familiar essay, which presents some aspects of the personality of the writer; the character essay, which portrays either individual traits, or a type, rank,

or class of person often emphasizing a particular quality common to all – frequently with a moral purpose; the descriptive essay, which gives a picture, coloured by personality of the writer; the critical essay, which attempts to pass judgement on works of art, characters and events of history, or on social phenomena; the scientific essay, which seeks to present the results of scientific observation – often with the intention popularizing interest in science; the philosophic or reflective essay, which presents the reflections of the writer on such truths as are shown in the realms of religion, philosophy, morals, education etc. (Gilyanova, Ossovskaya, 1978:90).

The most characteristic language features of this literary form are the following: brevity of expression, the use of the first person singular, a rather expanded use of connectives, the abundant use of emotive words etc. (Galperin, 1977: 294).

Francis Bacon's "Essays" (1597) began the tradition of essays in English, of which important examples are those of J. Addison, R. Steele, W. Hazlitt, R.W. Emerson, D.H. Lawrence, and V. Woolf. In the United States the essay followed the English pattern.

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## Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

***Biographical Notes.*** *Virginia Woolf (born Adeline Virginia Stephen) was*

*born into the late Victorian intellectual aristocracy in Hyde Park in London, as the daughter of Julia Jackson Duckworth, a member of the Duckworth publishing family, and Sir Leslie Stephen, a philosopher and a literary critic. He was connected with many of the leading artists and writers of that period. Virginia had two brothers and one sister. Her mother, Julia, died in 1895, when Virginia was thirteen years old. Virginia's early life was very hard. She witnessed her father's depression and suffered a mental breakdown herself after her mother's death. She suffered another breakdown in 1914, when her father died, this time trying to commit suicide.*

*After her father's death, in 1904, she, her sister Vanessa, and her brothers Adrian and Thoby moved to Bloomsbury, a bohemian section of London. Their house in Bloomsbury became the centre of literary interest among the intellectuals and artists of that time - the Bloomsbury group. From 1905 Woolf began to write for the Times Literary Supplement. In 1912 she married the political theorist Leonard (Sidney) Woolf. In 1915 she published her first book, "The Voyage Out". In 1917, the Woolfs started the publishing company (the Hogarth Press), that printed, apart from some of Virginia's own work, T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forster and Virginia's best friend, Kathrine Mansfield. With "To the Lighthouse" (1927) and "The Waves" (1931) Woolf established herself as one of the leading writers of modernism. Virginia Woolf is regarded as a major figure in the Modernist movement, making significant contributions to the development of the novel. She is known as an experimenter and innovator in novel writing, particularly in her use of the techniques of interior monologue and stream of consciousness. Her novels are known for their delicacy and sensitivity of style, their evocation of place and mood, and their background of historical and literary reference. Many are concerned with time, its passage and the difference between external and inner time.*

*Besides novels, V. Woolf also published many works of nonfiction, including two extended essays exploring the roles of women in history and society: "A Room of One's Own" (1929) and "Three Guineas" (1938), where she examined the*

*necessity for women to make a claim for their own history and literature. Her works of literary criticism include "The Common Reader" (1925) and "The Second Common Reader" (1932). After her death, Woolf's diaries were edited and published in five volumes between 1977 and 1984 as "The Diary of Virginia Woolf". "The Letters of Virginia Woolf" appeared in six volumes from 1975 to 1980.*

## MONTAIGNE

After all, in the whole literature, how many people have succeeded in drawing themselves with a pen? Only Montaigne and Pepys (1) and Rousseau (2) perhaps. The Religio Medici (3) is a coloured glass through which darkly one sees racing stars and a strange and turbulent soul. A bright polished mirror reflects the face of Boswell (4) peeping between other people's shoulders in the famous biography. But this talking of oneself, following one's vagaries, giving the whole map, weight, colour and circumference of the soul in its confusion, its variety, its imperfection – this art belonged to one man only: to Montaigne. As the centuries go by, there is always a crowd before that picture, gazing into its depths, seeing their own faces reflected in it, seeing more the longer they look, never being able to say quite what it is that they see. <…>

To tell the truth about oneself, to discover oneself near at hand, is not easy. We hear of but two or three of the ancients who have beaten this road [said Montaigne]. No one since has followed the track; 'tis a rugged road, more so it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain, as that of the soul; to penetrate the dark profundities of its intricate internal windings; to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions; 'tis a new and extraordinary undertaking, and that withdraws us from the common and most recommended employments of the world.

There is in the first place, the difficulty of expression. We all indulge in the strange, pleasant process called thinking, but when it comes to saying, even to some one opposite, what we think, then how little we are able to convey! The phantom is through the mind and out of the window before we can lay salt on its tail, or slowly

sinking and returning to the profound darkness which it has lit up momentarily with a wandering light. Face, voice, and accent eke out our words and impress their feebleness with character in speech. But the pen is a rigid instrument; it can say very little; it has all kinds of habits and ceremonies of its own. It is dictatorial too: it is always making ordinary men into prophets and changing the natural stumbling trip of human speech into solemn and stately march of pens. It is for this reason that Montaigne stands out from the legions of the dead with irrepressible vivacity. We can never doubt for an instant that his book was himself. He refused to teach; he refused to preach; he kept on saying that he was just like other people. All his effort was to write himself down; to communicate, to tell the truth, and that is a "rugged road, more so than it seems".

For beyond the difficulty of communicating oneself, there is a supreme difficulty of being oneself. This soul or life within us, by no means agrees with the life outside us. If one has the courage to ask her what she thinks, she is always saying the very opposite to what other people say. Other people, for instance, long ago made up their minds that old invalidish gentlemen ought to stay at home and edify the rest of us by the spectacle of their connubial fidelity. The soul of Montaigne said, on the contrary, that it is in old age that one ought to travel, and marriage, which, rightly, is very seldom founded on love, is apt to become, towards the end of life, a formal tie better broken up. Again with politics, statesmen are always praising the greatness of Empire, and preaching the moral duty of civilizing the savage. But look at the Spanish in Mexico, cried Montaigne in a burst of rage. "So many cities leveled with the ground, so many nations exterminated … and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside down for the traffic of pearl and pepper! Mechanic victories!" And then when the peasants came and told him that they had found a man dying of wounds and deserted him for fear lest justice might incriminate them, Montaigne asked:

*What could I have said to these people? 'Tis certain that this office of humanity would have brought them into trouble … There is nothing so much, nor so grossly, nor so ordinarily faulty as the laws.*

Here is the soul getting restive, is lashing out at the more palpable forms of Montaigne's great bugbears, convention and ceremony. But watch her as she broods over the fire in the inner room of that tower which, though detached from the main building, has so wide a view over the estate. Really she is the strangest creature in the world, far from heroic, variable as a weather cock, "bashful, insolent; chaste, lustful; prating, silent; lying, true; knowing, ignorant; liberal, covetous and prodigal" – in short, so complex, so indefinite, corresponding so little to the version which does duty for her in public, that a man might spend his life merely in trying to run her to earth. The pleasure of the pursuit more than rewards one for damage that it inflict upon one's worldly prospects. The man who is aware of himself is henceforward independent; and he is never bored, and life is only too short, and he is steeped through and through with a profound yet temperate happiness. He alone lives, while other people, slaves of ceremony, let life slip past them in a kind of dream. Once conform, once do what other people do because they do it, and a lethargy steals over all the finer nerves and faculties of the soul. She becomes all outer show and inward emptiness; dull, callous and indifferent.

Surely then, if we ask this great master of the art of life to tell us his secret, he will advise us to withdraw to the inner room of our tower and there turn the pages of books, pursue fancy after fancy as they chase each other up to the chimney, and leave the government of the world to others. Retirement and contemplation – these must be the main elements of his prescription. But no, Montaigne is by no means explicit. It is impossible to extract a plain answer from that subtle, half-smiling, half-melancholy man with the heavy-lidded eyes and dreamy, quizzical expression. <…>

(from "Collected Essays" by V. Woolf.
v. 3. London, 1967. P. 18-26.)

## Commentary

**(1)Pepys, Samuel (1633 – 1703)** – Сэмьюэл Пипс /Пепис/, английский чиновник адмиралтейства. В 1660 – 69 гг. Вёл дневник – важнейший источник сведений о жизни и быте того времени (впервые опубликован в XIX в.). **(2)**

**Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712 – 1778)** – Жан Жак Руссо, французский писатель и философ. В. Вульф имеет в виду его автобиографический роман «Исповедь» («Confessions»). **(3) Religio Medici** – сборник эссе Томаса Брауна (Sir Thomas Browne, 1605 – 1682), о котором В.Вульф сказала ”Few people love the writings of Sir Thomas Browne, but those who do are of the salt of the earth”. **(4) Boswell, James (1740 – 1795)** – Джеймс Босуэлл, английский писатель, друг и биограф знаменитого лексикографа С. Джонсона.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

bashful (a),callous (a), ceremony (n), chaste (a), circumference (n), conform (v), contemplation (n), convention (n), covetous(a), crayon (n), desert (v), evade (v), edify (v), estate (n), exterminate (v), explicit (a), feebleness (n), indulge (v), inflict (v), insolent (a), legion (n), lustful (a), nimble (a), peep (v), prating (a), prodigal (a), profound (a), prophet (n), pursuit (n), quizzical (a), restive (a), reward (v), rigid (a), rugged (a), savage (n), solemn (a), stately (a), steep (n), temperate (a), turbulent (a), vagary (n), variable (a)

to be apt to do something, to be aware of oneself, to communicate oneself, to do duty for somebody, to eke out, to extract an answer, to follow the track, to indulge in something, to lash out, to lay salt on one’s tail, to run something to earth, to slip past somebody, to stand out, to write oneself down

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. To tell the truth of oneself is not easy.
2. The pen is a rigid instrument; it can say very little; it has all kinds of habits and ceremonies of its own.
3. Montaigne stands out from the legions of the dead with irrepressible vivacity. We can never doubt for an instant that his book was himself.

4. All his effort was to write himself down, to communicate, to tell the truth, and that is a «rigid road, more than it seems».

5. This soul or life within us by no means agrees with the life outside us. If one has the courage to ask her what she thinks, she is always saying the very opposite to what other people say.

6. The man who is aware of himself is henceforward independent; and he is never bored, and life is only too short, and he is steeped through and through with a profound yet temperate happiness.

7. Once conform, once do what other people do because they do it and a lethargy steals over all the finer nerves and faculties of the soul.

8. For beyond the difficulty of communicating oneself, there is a supreme difficulty of being oneself. This soul or life within us, by no means agrees with the life outside us.

**3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text**

1. After all in the whole literature, how many people have succeeded in drawing themselves with a pen?

2. But this talking of oneself, following one's vagaries, giving the whole map, weight, colour and circumference of the soul in its confusion, its variety, its imperfection – this art belonged to one man only: to Montaigne.

3. We all indulge in the strange, pleasant process called thinking, but when it comes to saying, even to some one opposite, what we think, then how little we are able to convey!

4. The soul of Montaigne said, on the contrary, that it is in old age that one ought to travel, and marriage, which, rightly, is very seldom founded on love, is apt to become, towards the end of life, a formal tie better broken up.

5. The pleasure of the pursuit more than rewards one for damage that it inflict upon one' s worldly prospects.

6. Here is the soul getting restive, is lashing out at the more palpable forms of Montaigne's great bugbears, convention and ceremony.

7. Surely then, if we ask this great master of the art of life to tell us his secret, he will advise us to withdraw to the inner room of our tower and there turn the pages of books, pursue fancy after fancy as they chase each other up to the chimney, and leave the government of the world to others.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the text under study: classify it, give its essence.
2. How does V. Woolf characterize the behavior of human soul? Why is it the strangest creature in the world?
3. How does the life of independent people differ from the life of “slaves of ceremony”?
4. What helps people to be independent?
5. What happens to human souls when people conform, obey general rules?
6. Is V. Woolf right saying that retirement and contemplation are the main elements of Montaigne’s prescription of the art of life?
7. What is Montaigne’s manner of writing? Why is it impossible to extract a plain answer from that subtle, half-smiling man?
8. Analyze the compositional structure of the essay (introduction, body, conclusion).
9. Comment on the use of syntactical, lexical, phonetic stylistic devices.
10. Present the final text interpretation.

## LEWIS CARR0LL

The complete works of Lewis Carroll (1) have been issued by the Nonesuch Press in a stout volume of 1293 pages. So there is no excuse – Lewis Carroll ought once and for all to be complete. We ought to be able to grasp him whole and entire. But we fail – once more we fail. We think we have caught Lewis Carroll; we look again and we see an Oxford clergyman (2). We think we have caught the Rev. C.L. Dodgson – we look again and we see a fairy elf. The book breaks in two in our

hands. In order to cement it, we turn to the Life.

But the Rev. C.L. Dodgson had no life. He passed through the world so lightly that he left no print. He melted so passively into Oxford that he is invisible. He accepted every convention; he was prudish, pernickety, pious, and jocose. If Oxford dons in the nineteenth century had an essence he was that essence. He was so good that his sisters worshiped him; so pure that his nephew (3) has nothing to say about him. It is just possible, he hints, that ‘a shadow of disappointment lay over Lewis Carroll’s life (4). Mr. Dodgson at once denies the shadow. “My life,” he says, “is free from all trial and trouble”(5). But this untinted jelly contained within it a perfectly hard crystal. It contained childhood. And this is very strange, for childhood normally fades slowly. Wisps of childhood persist when the boy or girl is a grown man or woman. Childhood returns sometimes by day, more often by night. But it was not so with Lewis Carroll. For some reason, we know not what, his childhood was sharply severed. It lodged in him whole and entire. He could not disperse it. And therefore as he grew older this impediment in the centre of his being, this hard block of pure childhood, starved the mature man of nourishment. He slipped through the grown up world like a shadow, solidifying only on the beach at Eastbourne, with little girls whose frocks he pinned up with safety pins. But since childhood remained in him entire, he could do what no one else has ever been able to do – he could return to that world; he could re-create it, so that we too become children again.

In order to make us into children, he first makes us asleep. ‘Down, down, down, would the fall never come to an end?’(6) Down, down, down we fall into that terrifying, wildly inconsequent, yet perfectly logical world where time races, than stands still; where space stretches, then contracts. It is the world of sleep; it is also the world of dreams. Without any conscious effort dreams come; the white rabbit, the walrus, and the carpenter (7), one after another, turning and changing one into the other, they come skipping and leaping across the mind. It is for this reason that the two Alices are not books for children (8); they are the only books in which we become children. President Wilson (9), Queen Victoria, The Times leader writer, the late Lord Salisbury – it does not matter how old, how important, or how

insignificant you are, you become a child again. To become a child is to be very literal; to find everything so strange that nothing is surprising; to be heartless, to be ruthless, yet to be so passionate that a snub or a shadow drapes the world in gloom. It is to be Alice in Wonderland.

It is also to be Alice Through the Looking Glass. It is to see the world upside down. Many great satirists and moralists have shown us the world upside down, and have made us see it, as grown-up people see it, savagely. Only Lewis Carroll has shown us the world upside down as a child sees it, and has made us laugh, as children laugh, irresponsibly. Down the groves of pure nonsense we whirl laughing, laughing –

*They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care;*

*They pursued it with forks and hope… (10)*

And then we wake. None of the transitions in Alice in Wonderland is so queer. For we wake to find – is it the Rev. C.L. Dodgson? Is it Lewis Carroll? Or is it both combined? This conglomerate object intends to produce an extra-Bowdlerized edition of Shakespeare (11) for the use of British maidens; implores them to think of death when they go to play; and always, always to realize that 'the true object of life is the development of character…' Is there, then, even in 1293 pages, such thing as 'completeness'?

## Commentary

**(1) The complete works of Lewis Carroll** – имеется в виду издание полного собрания сочинений Кэрролла под редакцией А. Вулкотта (A. Woolcott) в 1939 г. **(2) an Oxford clergyman –** Чарльз Лютвидж Доджсон, заняв пост преподавателя математики в Оксфордском университете Крайст-Черч, принял духовный сан. В 1867 г. в составе церковной миссии Ч.Л. Доджсон был в России. **(3) his nephew –** Стюарт Доджсон Коллингвуд (Stuart Dodgson Collingwood), автор первой биографии писателя, появившейся через год после его смерти, "Жизнь и переписка Льюиса Кэрролла" ("The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll", 1898). **(4) " a shadow of disappointment lay over Lewis Carroll's**

**life”** – Исчезновение дневников Льюиса Кэрролла за 1858-1862 гг., как полагает Коллингвуд, объясняется тем, что в них могли отразиться его колебания в период принятия сана, либо переживания из-за несчастной любви. По всей вероятности, сёстры писателя сочли необходимым уничтожить некоторые страницы. **(5) “My life … is free from all trial and trouble**” – слова из дневника Льюиса Кэрролла. **(6) “Down, down, down, would the fall never come to an end?”** – фраза из первой книги “Алисы в стране чудес. (“Down the Rabbit – hole”). **(7) the white rabbit, the walrus, and the carpenter** – персонажи “Алисы в Стране чудес” и “ Алисы в Зазеркалье”. **(8) the two Alices are not books for children –** Джон Падни (Pudney), автор известной книги “Льюис Кэрролл и его мир” (“Lewis Carroll and his World”, 1976), утверждал, что “Алиса в Стране чудес” и “Алиса в Зазеркалье” не только сказки для детей. В этих книгах воссоздан облик Великобритании, её традиций и ритуалов, периода промышленного переворота и парламентских реформ. **(9) President Wilson** – Томас Вудро Вильсон (1856-1924), 28-й президент США (1913-1921), от демократической партии. **(10) “They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care; They pursued it with forks and hope…”** – строфа из поэмы Л. Кэрролла “ Охота на Снарка”, одного из классических образцов литературы “нонсенса”. Эти строки вошли в фонд крылатых выражений английского языка. **(11) an extra-Bowdlerized edition of Shakespeare** – имеется в виду десятитомное издание Шекспира, выпущенное Томасом Боудлером (Thomas Bowdler).

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

cement (v), conglomerate (a), contract (v), convention (n), disperse (v), don (n), drape (v), entire (adv), essence (n), fade (v), grove (n), impediment (n), inconsequent (a), irresponsibly (adv), jocose (a), literal (a), lodge (v), nourishment (n), pernickety (a), pious (a), prudish (a), print (n), ruthless (a), sever (v), skip (v), snub (n), solidify (v), thimble (n), trial (n), walrus (a), wisp (n)

to be severed, by day, by night, to disperse something, to make somebody into

somebody, once and for all

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. So there is no excuse – Lewis Carroll ought once and for all to be complete. We ought to be able to grasp him whole and entire. But we fail – once more we fail.
2. But the Rev. C.L. Dodgson had no life. He passed through the world so lightly that he left no print. He melted so passively into Oxford that he is invisible.
3. 'My life,' he says, 'is free from all trial and trouble.' But this untinted jelly contained within it a perfectly hard crystal. It contained childhood.
4. Childhood returns sometimes by day, more often by night. But it was not so with Lewis Carroll. For some reason, we know not what, his childhood was sharply severed. It lodged in him whole and entire.
5. To become a child is to be very literal; to find everything so strange that nothing is surprising; to be heartless, to be ruthless, yet to be so passionate that a snub or a shadow drapes the world in gloom. It is to be Alice in Wonderland.
6. Without any conscious effort dreams come; the white rabbit, the walrus, and the carpenter one after another, turning and changing one into the other, they come skipping and leaping across the mind. It is for this reason that the two Alices are not books for children; they are the only books in which we become children.

## 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. He was so good that his sisters worshiped him; so pure that his nephew has nothing to say about him. It is just possible, he hints, that 'a shadow of disappointment lay over Lewis Carroll's life.
2. He slipped through the grown up world like a shadow, solidifying only on the beach at Eastbourne, with little girls whose frocks he pinned up with safety pins. But since childhood remained in him entire, he could do what no one else has ever been able to do – he could return to that world; he could re-create it, so that we too become children again.

3. And this is very strange, for childhood normally fades slowly. Wisps of childhood persist when the boy or girl is a grown man or woman.

4. Many great satirists and moralists have shown us the world upside down, and have made us see it, as grown-up people see it, savagely. Only Lewis Carroll has shown us the world upside down as a child sees it, and has made us laugh, as children laugh, irresponsibly.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the text under study: classify it, give its essence.
2. Was publishing of complete works of Lewis Carroll an important event? Why?
3. Is it necessary to "grasp" C.L. Dodgson "whole and entire" to understand him better?
4. What kind of person was C.L. Dodgson? What was his relatives' attitude to him?
5. What did C.L. Dodgson think about his own life?
6. In what way did L.C. Dodgson differ from other people? Why could he return the world of childhood? What helped him to "…slip through the grown-up world like a shadow"?
7. Why are "the two Alices" not books for children? What kind of books are they?
8. What is the essence of being a child? Comment on V. Woolf's point view.
9. What is the difference between L.C. Dodgson and other satirists and moralists who have shown the world upside down in their books?
10. Do you agree with V. Woolf's understanding of the personality of L.C. Dodgson and his books?
11. Analyze the composition of the essay. Comment on the use of lexical, syntactical, phonetic stylistic devices.
12. Present the final text interpretation.

## On a Faithful Friend

There is some impertinence as well as some foolishness in the way in which we buy animals for so much gold and silver and call them ours. One cannot help wondering what the silent critic on the hearthrug thinks of the strange convention – the mystic Persian, whose ancestors were worshipped as gods whilst we, their masters and mistresses, groveled in caves and painted our bodies blue. She has a vast heritage of experience, which seems to brood in her eyes, too solemn and too subtle for expression; she smiles, I often think, at our late-born civilization, and remembers the rise and fall of dynasties. There is something, too, profane in the familiarity, half contemptuous, with which we treat our animals. We deliberately transplant a little bit of simple wild life, and make it grow up beside ours, which is neither simple nor wild. You may often see in a dog's eyes a sudden look of the primitive animal, as though he were once a wild dog hunting in the solitary places of his youth. How have we the impertinence to make these wild creatures forego their nature for ours, which at best they can but imitate? It is one of the refined sins of civilization, for we know not what wild spirit we are taking from its purer atmosphere, or who it is – Pan (1), or Nymph (2), or Dryad (3) – that we have trained to beg for a lump of sugar at tea.

I do not think that in domesticating our lost friend Shag we were guilty of any such crime; he was essentially a sociable dog, who had his near counterpart in the human world. I can see him smoking a cigar at the bow window of his club, his legs extended comfortably, whilst he discusses the latest news on the Stock Exchange with a companion. His best friend could not claim for him any romantic or mysterious animal nature, but that made him all the better company for mere human beings. He came to us, however, with a pedigree that had all the elements of romance in it; he, when, in horror at his price, his would-be purchaser pointed to his collie head and collie body, but terribly Skye-terrier legs – he, we were assured, was no less a dog than the original Skye-a chieftain of the same importance as the O'Brien or the O'Connor Don in human aristocracy. The whole of the Skye-terrier tribe – who, that is inherited the paternal characteristics – had somehow been swept from the earth; Shag, the sole scion of true Skye blood, remained in an obscure

Norfolk (4) village, the property of a low-born blacksmith, who, however, cherished the utmost loyalty for his person, and pressed the claims of his royal birth with such success that we had the honour of buying him for a very substantial sum. He was too great a gentleman to take part in the plebian work of killing rats for which he was originally needed, but he certainly added, we felt, to the respectability of the family. He seldom went for a walk without punishing the impertinence of middle-class dogs who neglected the homage due to his rank, and we had to enclose the royal jaws in a muzzle long after that restriction was legally unnecessary. As he advanced in middle life he became certainly rather autocratic, not only with his own kind, but with us, his masters and mistresses; such a title though was absurd where Shag was concerned, so we called ourselves his uncles and aunts. The solitary occasion when he found it necessary to inflict marks of his displeasure on human flesh was once when a visitor rashly tried to treat him as an ordinary pet-dog and tempted him with sugar and called him “out of his name” by the contemptible, lap-dog title “Fido” (5). Then Shag, with characteristic independence, refused the sugar and took a satisfactory mouthful of calf instead. But when he felt that he was treated with due respect, he was the most faithful of friends. He was not demonstrative; but failing eyesight did not blind him to his master’s face, and in his deafness he could still hear his master’s voice.

The evil spirit of Shag’s life was introduced into the family in the person of an attractive young sheep-dog puppy, who, though of authentic breed, was unhappy without a tail – a fact which Shag could not help remarking with satisfaction. We deluded ourselves into the thought of authentic breed, was unhappily without a tail – a fact which Shag could not help remarking with satisfaction. We deluded ourselves into the thought that the young dog might take the place of the son of Shag’s old age, and for a time they lived happily together. But Shag had ever been contemptuous of social graces, and relied for his place in our hearts upon his sterling qualities of honesty and independence; the puppy, however, was a young gentleman of most engaging manners, and, though we tried to be fair, Shag could not help feeling that the young dog got most of our attention. I can see him now, as in a kind

of blundering and shamefaced way he lifted one stiff old paw and gave it me to shake, which was one of the young dog's most successful tricks. It almost brought the tears to my eyes. I could not help thinking, though I smiled, of old King Lear (6). But Shag was too old to acquire new graces; no second place should be his, and he decided that the matter should be decided by force. So after some weeks of growing tension the battle was fought; they went for each other with white teeth gleaming – Shag was the aggressor – and rolled round and round on the grass, Locked in each other's grip. When at last we got them apart, blood was running, hair was flying, and both dogs had scars. Peace after that was impossible; they had but to see each other to growl and stiffen; the question was – Who was the conqueror? Who was to stay and who to go? The decision we came to was base, unjust, and, yet, perhaps excusable. The old dog has had his day, we said, we must give place to the new generation. So old Shag was deposed, and sent to a kind of dignified dower-house at Parson's-green, and the young dog reigned in his stead. Year after year passed, and we never saw the old friend who had known us in the days of our youth; but n the summer holidays he revisited the house in our absence with the caretaker. And so time went on till this last year, which, though we did not know it, was the last year of his life. Then, one winter's night, at a time of great sickness and anxiety, a dog was heard barking repeatedly, with the bark of a dog, who waits to be let in, outside our kitchen door. It was many years since that bark had been heard, and only one person in the kitchen was able to recognize it now. She opened the door, and in walked Shag, now almost quite blind and stone deaf, as he had walked in many times before, and, looking neither to right nor to left, went to his old corner by the fireside, where he curled up and fell asleep without a sound. If the usurper saw him he curled guiltily away, for Shag was past fighting for his rights any more. We shall never know – it is one of the many things that we can never know – what strange wave of memory or sympathetic instinct it was that drew Shag from the house where he had lodged for years to seek again the familiar doorstep of his master's home. And it befell that Shag was the last of the family to live in the old house, for it was in crossing the road which leads to the gardens where he was taken for walks as a

puppy, and bit all other dogs and frightened all the babies in their perambulators, that he met his death. The blind, deaf dog neither saw nor heard a hansom; and the wheel went over him and ended instantly a life which couldn't be happily prolonged. It was better for him to die thus out among the wheels and horses than to end in a lethal-chamber or be poisoned in a stable-yard.

So we farewell to a dear and faithful friend, whose virtues we remember – and dogs have few faults.

## Commentary

**(1) Pan** – в греческой мифологии первоначально бог стад, покровитель пастухов, затем всей природы. Изображался в виде человека с козлиными рогами, копытами и бородой. Ему соответствует Рим. Фавн. **(2) Nymph** – в греческой мифологии божество природы женского рода, живущее в горах, лесах, морях, источниках. **(3) Dryad** – в греческой мифологии нимфа деревьев, обитавшая в лесах и рощах. **(4) Norfolk** – графство в Великобритании, главный город Норидж. **(5) Fido –** кличка собаки. Считается, что это обычная кличка собаки, но в действительности она даётся собакам очень редко. **(6) King Lear** – пьеса В. Шекспира о старом короле, который поделил своё королевство между дочерьми, руководствуясь их уверениями в любви к нему, и был обманут ими.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

ancestor (n), authentic (a), breed (n), contemptible (a), contemptuous (a), delude (v), dower-house (n), domesticating (n), essentially (adv), grovel (v), growl (v), hansom (n), impertinence (n), lap-dog title (n), lethal-chamber (n), lodge (v), pedigree (n), profane (a), scion (n), slunk (v), stiffen (v)

to be deposed, to be guilty of something

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. One cannot help wondering what the silent critic on the hearthrug thinks of the strange convention – the mystic Persian, whose ancestors were worshipped as gods whilst we, their masters and mistresses, groveled in caves and painted our bodies blue.

2. There is something, too, profane in the familiarity, half contemptuous, with which we treat our animals. We deliberately transplant a little bit of simple wild life, and make it grow up beside ours, which is neither simple nor wild.

3. How have we the impertinence to make these wild creatures forego their nature for ours, which at best they can but imitate? It is one of the refined sins of civilization, for we know not what wild spirit we are taking from its purer atmosphere, …

4. I do not think that in domesticating our lost friend Shag we were guilty of any such crime; he was essentially a sociable dog, who had his near counterpart in the human world.

5. He was too great a gentleman to take part in the plebian work of killing rats for which he was originally needed, but he certainly added, we felt, to the respectability of the family.

6. He was not demonstrative; but failing eyesight did not blind him to his master's face, and in his deafness he could still hear his master's voice.

7. We shall never know – it is one of the many things that we can never know – what strange wave of memory or sympathetic instinct it was that drew Shag from the house where he had lodged for years to seek again the familiar doorstep of his master's home.

8. …. dogs have few faults.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. There is some impertinence as well as some foolishness in the way in which we buy animals for so much gold and silver and call them ours.

2. One cannot help wondering what the silent critic on the hearthrug thinks of the

strange convention – the mystic Persian, whose ancestors were worshipped as gods whilst we, their masters and mistresses, groveled in caves and painted our bodies blue.

3. He seldom went for a walk without punishing the impertinence of middle-class dogs who neglected the homage due to his rank, and we had to enclose the royal jaws in a muzzle long after that restriction was legally unnecessary.

4. The solitary occasion when he found it necessary to inflict marks of his displeasure on human flesh was once when a visitor rashly tried to treat him as an ordinary pet-dog and tempted him with sugar and called him “out of his name” by the contemptible, lap-dog title “Fido”.

5. The evil spirit of Shag’s life was introduced into the family in the person of an attractive young sheep-dog puppy, who, though of authentic breed, was unhappy without a tail – a fact which Shag could not help remarking with satisfaction.

6. But Shag had ever been contemptuous of social graces, and relied for his place in our hearts upon his sterling qualities of honesty and independence; the puppy, however, was a young gentleman of most engaging manners, and, though we tried to be fair, Shag could not help feeling that the young dog got most of our attention.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the text under study: classify it, give its essence.

2. What is the main idea of the essay? In what key is the essay written?

3. What are V. Woolf’s views on keeping pets? Why does she personify cats and dogs? What narrative purposes might this personification serve?

4. Comment on the conflict between Shag and a young sheep-dog puppy. How would you solve this conflict?

5. Comment on Shag’s visit of his master’s home.

6. Analyze the composition of the essay. Comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.

7. Present the final text interpretation.

## The Patron and the Crocus

Young men and women beginning to write are generally given the plausible but utterly impracticable advice to write what they have to write as shortly as possible, as clearly as possible, and without other thought in their minds except to say exactly what is in them. Nobody ever adds on these occasions the one thing needful: “And be sure you choose your patron wisely,” though that is the gist of the whole matter. For a book is always written for somebody to read, and since the patron is not merely the paymaster, but in a very subtle and insidious way the instigator and inspirer of what is written, it is of the utmost importance that he should be a desirable man.

But who, then, is a desirable man – the patron who will cajole the best out of the writer’s brain and bring to birth the most varied and vigorous progeny of which he is capable? Different ages have answered the question differently. The Elizabethans, to speak roughly, chose the aristocracy to write for and the playhouse public. The eighteenth-century patron was a combination of coffee-house wit and Grub Street bookseller. In the nineteenth century the great writers wrote for the half-crown magazines and the leisured classes. And looking back and applauding the splendid results of these different alliances, it all seems enviably simple, and plain as a pikestaff compared with our own predicament – for whom should we write? For the present supply of patrons is of unexampled and bewildered variety. There is the daily press, the weekly press, the monthly Press; the English public and the American public; the best-seller public and the worst-seller public; the high-brow public and the red-blood public; all now organized self-conscious entities capable through their various mouthpieces of making their needs and their approval of displeasure felt. Thus the writer who has been moved by the sight of the first crocus in Kensington Gardens has, before he sets pen to paper, to choose from a crowd of competitors the particular patron who suits him best. It is futile to say, “Dismiss them all; think only of the crocus,” because writing is the method of communication;

and the crocus is an imperfect crocus until it has been shared. The first man or the last may write for himself alone, but he is an exception and an unenviable one at that, and the gulls are welcome to his works if the gulls can read them.

Granted, then, that every writer has some public or other at the end of his pen, the high-minded will say that it should be a submissive public, accepting obediently whatever he likes to give it. Plausible as the theory sounds, great risks are attached to it. For in that case the writer remains conscious of his public, yet is superior to it – an uncomfortable and unfortunate combination, as the works of Samuel Butler, George Meredith, and Henry Games may be taken to prove. Each despised the public; and each wreaked his failure upon the public by a succession, gradually increasing in intensity, of angularities, obscurities, and affectations which no writer whose patron was his equal and friend would have thought it necessary to inflict. Their crocuses in consequence are tortured plants, beautiful and bright, but with something wry-necked about them, malformed, shriveled on the one side, overblown on he other. A touch of the sun would have done them a world of good. Shall we then rush to the opposite extreme and accept (if in infancy alone) the flattering proposals which the editors of the *Times* and the *Daily News* may be supposed to make us – "Twenty pounds down for your crocus in precisely fifteen hundred words, which shall blossom upon every breakfast table from John o'Groats to the Land's End before nine o'clock to-morrow morning with the writer's name attached"?

But will one crocus be enough, and must it not be a very brilliant yellow to shine so far, to cost so much, and to have one name attached to it? The Press is undoubtedly a great multiplier of crocuses. But if we look at some of these plants, we shall find that they are only very distantly related to the original little yellow or purple flower which pokes up through the grass in Kensington Gardens about this time of year. The newspaper crocus is amazing but still a very different plant. It fills precisely the space allotted to it. It radiates a golden glow. It is genial, affable, warmhearted. It is beautifully finished, too, for let nobody think that the art of "our dramatic critic" of the *Times* or of Mr. Lynd of the *Daily News* is an easy one. It is no despicable feat to start a million brains running at nine o'clock in the morning, to

give two million eyes something bright and brisk and amusing to look at. But the night comes and these flowers fade. So little bits of glass lose their luster if you take them out of the sea; great prima donnas howl like hyenas if you shut them up in telephone boxes; and the most brilliant of articles when removed from its element is dust and sand and the husks of straw. Journalism embalmed in a book is unreadable.

The Patron we want, then, is one who will help us to preserve our flowers from decay. But as his qualities change from age to age, and it needs considerable integrity and conviction not be dazzled by the pretensions or bamboozled by the persuasions of the competing crowd, this business of patron-finding is one of the tests and trials of authorship. To know whom to write for is to know how to write. Some of the modern patron's qualities are, however, fairy plain. The writer will require at this moment, it is obvious, a patron with the book-reading habit rather than the play-going habit. Nowadays, too, he must be instructed in the literature of other times and races. But there are other qualities which our special weakness and tendencies demand in him. There is the question of indecency, for instance, which plagues us and puzzles us much more than it did the Elizabethans. The twentieth-century patron must be immune from shock. He must distinguish infallibly between the little clod of manure which sticks to the crocus of necessity, and that which is plastered to it out of bravado. He must be a judge, too, of those social influences which inevitably play so large a part in modern literature, and able to say which matures and fortifies, which inhibits and makes sterile. Further, there is emotion for him to pronounce on, and in no department can he do more useful work than in bracing a writer against sentimentality on the one hand and a craven fear of expressing his feeling on the other. It is worse, he will say, and perhaps more common, to be afraid of feeling than to feel too much. He will add, perhaps, something about language, and point out how many words Shakespeare used and how much grammar Shakespeare violated, while we, though we keep our fingers so demurely to the black notes on the piano, have not appreciably improved upon *Antony and Cleopatra*. And if you can forget your sex altogether, he will say, so much the better$ a writer has none. But all this is by the way – elementary and

disputable. The patron's prime quality is something different, only to be expressed perhaps by the use of that convenient word which cloaks so much – atmosphere. It is necessary that the patron should shed and envelop the crocus in an atmosphere which makes it appear a plant of the very highest importance, so that to misrepresent it is the one outrage not to be forgiven this side of the grave. He must make us feel that a single crocus, if it be a real crocus, is enough for him; that he does not want to be lectured, elevated, instructed, or improved; that he is sorry that he bullied Carlyle into vociferation, Tennyson into idyllics, and Ruskin into insanity; that he is now ready to efface himself or assert himself as his writers require; that he is bound to them by a more than maternal tie; that they are twins indeed, one dying if the other dies, one flourishing if the other flourishes; that the fate of literature depends upon their happy alliance – all of which proves, as we began by saying, that the choice of a patron is of the highest importance. But how to choose rightly? How to write well? Those are the questions.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

affable (a), affectation (n), alliance (n), angularity (n), attain (v), bewildering (a), cajole (v), conviction (n), crocus (n), demurely (adv), despicable (a), entity (n), feat (n), fortify (v), futile (a), gist (n), gull (n), high-brow (a), howl (v), husk (n), hyena (n), implacable (a),infallibly (adv), inflict (v), inhibit (v),insidious (a), instigation (n), integrity (n), malformed (a), multiplier (n), manure (n), mature (a), obscurity (n), patron (n), paymaster (n), pikestaff (n), plague (v), plausible (a), predicament (n), progeny (n), submissive (a), torture (n), unenviable (a), unexampled (a), vigorous (a), vociferation (n), wry-necked (a)

to assert oneself, to efface oneself, to be allotted to something, to be attached to something, to be bamboozled, to be embalmed, to be immure from shock, to have something at the end of one's pen, to set pen to paper

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. Young men and women beginning to write are generally given the plausible but utterly impracticable advice to write what they have to write as shortly as possible, as clearly as possible, and without other thought in their minds except to say exactly what is in them.

**2.** Nobody ever adds on these occasions the one thing needful: "And be sure you choose your patron wisely," though that is the gist of the whole matter.

3. But who, then, is a desirable man – the patron who will cajole the best out of the writer's brain and bring to birth the most varied and vigorous progeny of which he is capable? Different ages have answered the question differently.

**4.** And looking back and applauding the splendid results of these different alliances, it all seems enviably simple, and plain as a pikestaff compared with our own predicament – for whom should we write? For the present supply of patrons is of unexampled and bewildered variety.

5. Thus the writer who has been moved by the sight of the first crocus in Kensington Gardens has, before he sets pen to paper, to choose from a crowd of competitors the particular patron who suits him best. It is futile to say, "Dismiss them all; think only of the crocus," because writing is the method of communication; and the crocus is an imperfect crocus until it has been shared.

**6.** The Press is undoubtedly a great multiplier of crocuses. But if we look at some of these plants, we shall find that they are only very distantly related to the original little yellow or purple flower which pokes up through the grass in Kensington Gardens about this time of year.

**7.** To know whom to write for is to know how to write.

**8.** Journalism embalmed in a book is unreadable.

**9.** The patron's prime quality is something different, only to be expressed perhaps by the use of that convenient word which cloaks so much – atmosphere. It is necessary that the patron should shed and envelop the crocus in an atmosphere which makes it appear a plant of the very highest importance, so that to misrepresent it is the one outrage not to be forgiven this side of the grave.

## 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

**1.** For a book is always written for somebody to read, and since the patron is not merely the paymaster, but in a very subtle and insidious way the instigator and inspirer of what is written, it is of the utmost importance that he should be a desirable man.

**2.** The Elizabethans, to speak roughly, chose the aristocracy to write for and the playhouse public. The eighteenth-century patron was a combination of coffee-house wit and Grub Street bookseller. In the nineteenth century the great writers wrote for the half-crown magazines and the leisured classes.0

**3.** And looking back and applauding the splendid results of these different alliances, it all seems enviably simple, and plain as a pikestaff compared with our own predicament – for whom should we write? For the present supply of patrons is of unexampled and bewildered variety.

**4.** Granted, then, that every writer has some public or other at the end of his pen, the high-minded will say that it should be a submissive public, accepting obediently whatever he likes to give it.

**5.** It is no despicable feat to start a million brains running at nine o'clock in the morning, to give two million eyes something bright and brisk and amusing to look at. But the night comes and these flowers fade.

**6.** The writer will require at this moment, it is obvious, a patron with the book-reading habit rather than the play-going habit. Nowadays, too, he must be instructed in the literature of other times and races. But there are other qualities which our special weakness and tendencies demand in him.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the text under study: classify it, give its essence.
2. Comment on the title of the essay. What is the main idea of the essay? What idea

does crocus symbolize? In what key is the essay written?

3. What advice are young writers generally given?

4. Are the books usually written for somebody to read them? How did different ages answer this question?

5. Comment on the phrase “To know whom to write for is to know how to write”.

6. Why should young writers choose their patron’s wisely? Is it the gist of the matter?

7. What kind of patron is necessary for a young writer? How do patrons change in the course of time? What kind of person must be the 20th century patron?

7. Analyze the composition of the essay. Comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.

8. Comment on the peculiarities of V. Woolf’s individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

## Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

***Biographical Notes***. *Sir Francis Bacon) was an English lawyer, statesman, essayist, historian and philosopher. He was born to a prominent family. His father Nicolas Bacon, was the Lord Keeper of the Seal of Elizabeth 1. Francis was first educated at home, at his family estate at Gorhambury in Herfordshire. At the age of twelve, he entered Trinity College, Cambridge University and dedicated himself to studying law. His father died when he was 18, and being the youngest son it left him penniless. In 1582 he completed his law degree and was appointed a lecturer in law at Gray’s Inn. In 1584 he was elected to Parliament and remained as a representative for the next 36 years.*

*In 1593 his successful career was interrupted because of his criticism of a new tax levy. The Queen took personal offence at his position. His rich relatives did little to advance his carrier and Elisabeth distrusted him. It was not until James 1became king that Bacon’s career advanced. Since 1603, when James I succeeded Elizabeth I and Bacon had swiftly ascended the ladder of the state,*

*taking high advisory positions – King's Counsel, Solicitor General, Attorney General, Lord Keeper of the Royal Seal (his father's former office) and, finally, Lord Chancellor (1618). In 1621 he suffered a great fall - he was arrested and charged with bribery. After pleading guilty, he was heavily fined and sentenced to a prison term in the Tower of London. Although the fine later waived and Bacon spent only four days in the Tower, he was never allowed to sit in Parliament or hold political office again. As various chroniclers of the case have pointed out, the accepting of gifts from suppliants in a law suit was a common practice in Bacon's day, and it is also true that Bacon ended up judging against the two petitioners who had offered the fateful bribes.. Many writers characterize him as cold, calculating and arrogant. Yet whatever his flaws, even his enemies conceded that during his trial he accepted his punishment nobly.*

*Bacon had never married and explained his views on marriage and love in his essays. He died on April 9, 1626, of bronchitis contracted while testing his theory of the preservative qualities of snow.*

## OF STUDIES

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one: but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar: they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find

talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but only curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave logic and rhetoric, able to contend: ABEUNT STUDIA IN MORES (1); nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head and the like; so if a man's wit be wandering let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find difference, let him study the schoolmen; for they are GYMINI SECTORES (2). If he be not apt to beat over matters, and not to call upon thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

## Commentary

**(1) ABEUNT STUDIA IN MORES** – (лат.) занятия налагают отпечаток на характер. **(2) GYMINI SECTORES** – (лат.) расщепляющие тминные зёрна; характеризует тех, кто вдаётся в излишние тонкости.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

affectation (n), bowling (n), chew (v), confer (v), conference (n), confute (v), contemn (v), contend (v), counsel (n), crafty (a), cunning (n), curiously (adv), digest (v), diligence (n), discourse (n), execute (v), flashy (a), impediment (n), ornament (n), perfect (v), prune (v), receipt (n), sloth (n), subtle (a)

to be apt to something, to beat over matters, disposition of business, to judge by particulars, meaner sort of books, marshalling of affairs, one by one, to read by deputy, to take for granted

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability.
2. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholy by their rules, is the humor of the scholar.
3. Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weight and consider.
4. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested...
5. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; …
6. Histories make people wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; ...

## 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is wisdom without them and above them, won by observation.
2. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things.

3. ... there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises;...

4. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and not to call upon thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. What is the general slant of the essay?
3. What is F. Bacon's understanding of the problem of studies? What do studies serve for? Do studies perfect nature and how?
4. What is the attitude of different categories of people (crafty, simple, wise) to studies?
5. What are F. Bacon's recommendations concerning reading? How does reading influence people?
6. How do different sciences improve people's abilities?
7. Does F. Bacon draw any parallel between the development of human body with the help of exercises and the development of human mind?
8. Analyze the composition of the essay. Comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
9. Comment on F. Bacon's individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

## Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870)

***Biographical Notes.*** *Ch. Dickens, a famous English novelist, was born in Portsmouth on the 7th of February, 1812 into a middle class family of a civil servant John Dickens. He grew up in the pastoral pre-industrial countryside along the south coast of England. His family didn't have financial stability. Being a child, Charles worked at a factory and his father was often imprisoned for debt. After a brief period as a short-hand writer, Ch. Dickens moved into journalism,*

*working as a reporter on «The True Sun» and «The Morning Chronicle». Reporting on Parliamentary debates and other political matters sharpened his eye for detail and sense of the comic. From journalism he moved into creative writing, beginning with the publication of «Sketches by Boz» ( 1836) and the «Pickwick Papers» (1837) which were a tremendous success. He quickly achieved enormous fame both in England and in America for his humorous characterization, sentimental style and his ability to include contemporary social and political themes in his works. All his novels reveal a keen interest in the social conditions of the day. Many of his fifteen novels remain popular; among them are «Great Expectations», «A Tale of Two Cities», «Oliver Twist», «Nicholas Nickleby», «David Copperfield», «Hard Times», as well as his shorter work « A Christmas Carol». Ch. Dickens died on the 9th of June, 1870. His last novel «The Mistery of Edwin Drood», an excellent detective story in the W. Collin's tradition remained unfinished.*

## Among the Condemned

A few paces up the yard, and forming a continuation of the building, in which are the two rooms we have just quitted, lie the condemned cells. The entrance is by a narrow and obscure staircase leading to a dark passage, in which a charcoal stove casts a lurid tint over the objects in its immediate vicinity, and diffuses something like warmth around. From the left-hand side of this passage, the massive door of every cell on the storey opens; and from it alone they can be approached. There are three of these passages, and three of these ranges of cells, one above the other; but in size, furniture and appearance, they are all precisely alike. Prior to the recorder's report being made, all the prisoners under sentence of death are removed from the day-room at five o'clock in the afternoon, and locked up in these cells, where they are allowed a candle until ten o'clock, and here they remain until seven next morning. When the warrant for a prisoner's execution arrives, he is removed to the cells and confined in one of them until he leaves it for

the scaffold. He is at liberty to walk in the yard; but, both in his walks and in his cell, he is constantly attended by a turnkey, who never leaves him at any pretence.

We entered the first cell. It was a stone dungeon, eight feet long by six wide, with a bench at the upper end, under which were a common rug, a bible, and a prayerbook. An iron candlestick was fixed into the wall at the side; and a small high window in the back admitted as much air and light as could struggle in between a double row of heavy, crossed iron bars. It contained no other furniture of any description.

Conceive the situation of a man, spending his last night on earth in this cell. Buoyed up with some vague and undefined hope of reprieve, he knew not why – indulging in some wild and visionary idea of escaping, he knew not how – hour after hour of the three preceding days allowed him for preparation, has fled with a speed which no man living would deem possible, for none but this dying man can know. He has wearied his friends with entreaties, exhausted the attendants with importunities, neglected in his feverish restlessness the timely warning of his spiritual consoler; and, now that the illusion is at last dispelled, now that eternity is before him and guilt behind, now that his fears of death amount almost to madness, and an overwhelming sense of his helpless, hopeless state rushes upon him, he is lost and stupefied, and has neither thoughts to turn to, nor power to call upon, the Almighty Being, from whom alone he can seek mercy and forgiveness, and before whom his repentance can alone avail.

Hours have glided by, and still he sits upon the same stone bench with folded arms, heedless alike of the fast decreasing time before him, and the urgent entreaties of the good man at his side. The feeble light is wasting gradually, and the deathlike stillness of the street, broken only by the rumbling of some passing vehicle which echoes mournfully through the empty yards, warns him that the night is waning fast away. The deep bell of St. Paul’s strikes – one! He heard it; it has roused him. Seven hours left! He paces the narrow limits of his cell with rapid strides, cold drops of terror starting on his forehead, and every muscle of his frame quivering with agony. Seven hours! He suffers himself to be led to his seat,

mechanically takes the bible which is placed in his hand, and tries to read and listen. No: his thoughts will wander. The book is torn and soiled by use – and like the book he read his lesson in, at school, just forty years ago! He has never bestowed a thought upon it, perhaps, since he left it as a child: and yet the place, the time, the room – nay, the very boys he played with, crowd as vividly before him as if they were scenes of yesterday; and some forgotten phrase, some childish word, rings in his ears like the echo of one uttered but a minute since. The voice of the clergyman recalls him to himself. He is reading from the sacred book its solemn promises of pardon for repentance, and its awful denunciation of obdurate men. He falls upon his knees and clasps his hands to pray. Hush! What sound was that? He starts upon his feet. It cannot be two yet. Hark! Two quarters have struck; the third – the forth. It is! Six hours left. Tell him not to repentance! Six hour's repentance for eight times, six years of guilt and sin! He buries his face in his hands, and throws himself on the bench.

Worn with watching and excitement, he sleeps, and the same unsettled state of mind pursues him in his dreams. An insupportable load is taken from his breast; he is walking with his wife in a pleasant field, with the bright sky above them, and a fresh and boundless prospect on every side – how different from the stone walls of Newgate! She is looking – not as she did when he saw her for the last time in that dreadful place, but as she used when he loved her – long, long ago, before misery and ill-treatment had altered her looks, and voice had changed its nature, and she is leaning upon his arm, and looking up into his face with tenderness and affection – and he does not strike her now, nor rudely shake her from him. And oh! How glad he is to tell her all he had forgotten in that last hurried interview, and to fall on his knees before her fervently beseech her pardon for all the unkindness and cruelty that wasted her form and broke her heart! The scene suddenly changes. He is on his trial again: there are the judge and jury, and prosecutors, and witnesses, just as they were before. How full the Court is – with a sea of heads – with a gallows, too, and a scaffold – and how all those people stare at *him*! Verdict, "Guilty". No matter; he will escape.

The night is dark and cold, the gates have been left open, and in an instant he is in the street, flying from the scene of this imprisonment like the wind. The streets are cleared, the open fields are gained and the broad wide country lies before him. Onward he dashes in the midst of darkness, over hedge and ditch, through mud and pool, bounding from spot to spot with a speed and lightness, astonishing even to himself. At length he pauses; he must be safe from pursuit now; he will stretch himself on that bank and sleep till sunrise.

A period of unconsciousness succeeds. He wakes, cold and wretched. The dull grey light of morning is stealing into the cell, and falls upon the form of the attendant turnkey. Confused by his dreams, he starts from his uneasy bed in momentary uncertainty. It is but momentary. Every object in the narrow cell is too frightfully real to admit of doubt or mistake. He is the condemned felon again, guilty and despairing; and in two hours more will he be dead.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

avail (v), beseech (v), bestow (v), charcoal (a), conceive (v), deem (v), denunciation (n), diffuse (v), dispel (v), dungeon (n), entreaty (n), felon (n), fervently (adv), heedless (a), importunity (n), indulge (v), lurid (a), obdurate (v), obscure (a), prior (a), pursue (v), quit (v), reprieve (n), repentance (n), rumbling (n), scaffold (n), turnkey (n), vicinity (n), warrant (n)

to be buoyed up, to glide by, to be at liberty, at any pretence, to struggle in, to be stupefied, to wane away

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. Conceive the situation of a man, spending his last night on earth in this cell.
2. Hours have glided by, and still he sits upon the same stone bench with folded arms, heedless alike of the fast decreasing time before him, and the urgent entreaties of the good man at his side.

3. He paces the narrow limits of his cell with rapid strides, cold drops of terror starting on his forehead, and every muscle of his frame quivering with agony.
4. He suffers himself to be led to his seat, mechanically takes the bible which is placed in his hand, and tries to read and listen. No: his thoughts will wander.
5. An insupportable load is taken from his breast; he is walking with his wife in a pleasant field, with the bright sky above them, and a fresh and boundless prospect on every side – how different from the stone walls of Newgate!
6. The book is torn and soiled by use – and like the book he read his lesson in, at school, just forty years ago! He has never bestowed a thought upon it, perhaps, since he left it as a child …
7. Confused by his dreams, he starts from his uneasy bed in momentary uncertainty. It is but momentary. Every object in the narrow cell is too frightfully real to admit of doubt or mistake. He is the condemned felon again, guilty and despairing; and in two hours more will he be dead.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. The entrance is by a narrow and obscure staircase leading to a dark passage, in which a charcoal stove casts a lurid tint over the objects in its immediate vicinity, and diffuses something like warmth around.
2. Prior to the recorder's report being made, all the prisoners under sentence of death are removed from the day-room at five o'clock in the afternoon, and locked up in these cells, where they are allowed a candle until ten o'clock, and here they remain until seven next morning.
3. He is at liberty to walk in the yard; but, both in his walks and in his cell, he is constantly attended by a turnkey, who never leaves him at any pretence.
4. Buoyed up with some vague and undefined hope of reprieve, he knew not why – indulging in some wild and visionary idea of escaping, he knew not how – hour after hour of the three preceding days allowed him for preparation, has fled with a speed which no man living would deem possible, for none but this dying man can

know.

5. He has wearied his friends with entreaties, exhausted the attendants with importunities, neglected in his feverish restlessness the timely warning of his spiritual consoler; and, now that the illusion is at last dispelled, now that eternity is before him and guilt behind, now that his fears of death amount almost to madness, and an overwhelming sense of his helpless, hopeless state rushes upon him …

6. The voice of the clergyman recalls him to himself. He is reading from the sacred book its solemn promises of pardon for repentance, and its awful denunciation of obdurate men.

7. Confused by his dreams, he starts from his uneasy bed in momentary uncertainty. It is but momentary. Every object in the narrow cell is too frightfully real to admit of doubt or mistake. He is the condemned felon again, guilty and despairing; and in two hours more will he be dead.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. Comment on the theme of the essay. Expand on its title.
3. What is the general slant of the essay? Comment on the description of the prison.
4. Does Dickens approve of the way a condemned prisoner is treated?
5. What is the role of religion in the condemned prisoner’s life?
6. What do we learn from the essay about the condemned prisoner? Why is Dickens vague about his crime?
7. Characterize the text under study. Say whether it presents a piece of narration, a description, character drawing, etc. Comment on the use of expressive means of the language.
8. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
9. Comment on Ch. Dickens’s individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

## Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)http://www.britannica.com/ebc/art?id=14793&type=A

***Biographical Notes***. *Thoreau, a U.S. thinker, essayist, and naturalist, born July 12, 1817, Concord, Mass., U.S.- died May 6, 1862, Concord. H.D. Thoreau is best known for «Civil Disobedience», a short piece of writing on refusing to obey unfair laws which influenced Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Thoreau graduated from Harvard University and taught at school for several years before leaving his job to become a poet of nature. Back in Concord, he came under the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson and began to publish pieces in the Transcendentalist magazine The Dial. In the years 1845–47, to demonstrate how satisfying a simple life could be, he lived in a hut beside Concord's Walden Pond; essays recording his daily life were assembled for his masterwork "Walden" (1854). His "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers"(1849) was the only other book he published in his lifetime. He reflected on a night he spent in jail protesting the Mexican-American War in the essay "Civil Disobedience" (1849), which would later influence such figures as Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. In later years his interest in Transcendentalism waned, and he became a dedicated abolitionist. His many nature writings and records of his wanderings in Canada, Maine, and Cape Cod display the mind of a keen naturalist. After his death his collected writings were published in 20 volumes, and further writings have continued to appear in print.*

## Love

What the essential difference between man and woman is that they should be thus attracted to one another, no one has satisfactorily answered. Perhaps we must acknowledge the justness of the distinction which assigns to man the sphere of wisdom, and to woman that of love, though neither belongs exclusively to either. Man is continually saying to woman, Why will you not be more wise? Woman is continually saying to man, Why will you not be more loving? It is not in their wills

to be wise or to be loving; but, unless each is both wise and loving, there can be neither wisdom nor love.

All transcendent goodness is one, though appreciated in different ways, or by different senses. In beauty we see it, in music we hear it, in fragrance we scent it, in the palatable the pure palate tastes it, and in rare health the whole body feels it. The variety is in the surface of manifestation; but the radical identity we fail to express. The lover sees in the glance of his beloved the same beauty that in the sunset paints the western skies. It is the same diamond, here lurking under a human eyelid, and there under the closing eyelids of the day. Here, in small compass, is the ancient and natural beauty of evening and morning. What loving astronomer has ever fathomed ethereal depths of the eye?

The maiden conceals a fairer flower and sweeter fruit than any calyx in the field; and, if she goes with averted face, confiding in her purity and high resolves, she will make the heavens retrospective, and all nature humbly confess its queen.<…>

There is at first thought something trivial in the commonness of love. So many Indian youths and maidens along these banks have in ages past yielded to the influence of this great civilizer. Nevertheless, this generation is not disgusted nor discouraged, for love is no individual experience; and though we are imperfect mediums, it does not partake of our imperfection; though we are finite, it is infinite and eternal; and the same divine influence broods over these banks, whatever race may inhabit them, and perchance still would, even if the human race did not dwell here.

Perhaps an instinct survives through the intensest actual love, which prevents entire abandonment and devotion, and makes the most ardent lover a little reserved. It is the anticipation of change. For the most ardent lover is not the less practically wise, and seeks a love which will last forever. <…>

Our love may be ascending and descending. What is its character, if it may be said of it, -

"We must *respect* the souls above,

But only *those below* we love."

Love is a severe critic. Hate can pardon more than love. They who aspire to love worthily, subject themselves to an ordeal more rigid than any other. <…>

Love must be as much a light as a flame.

Where there is not discernment, the behavior even of the purest soul may in effect amount in coarseness.

A man of fine perception is more truly feminine than a merely sentimental woman. The heart is blind, but Love is not blind. None of the gods is so discriminating. <…>

Love is the profoundest of secrets. Divulged, even to the beloved, it is no longer Love. As if it were merely I that loved you. When love ceases, then it is divulged.

In our intercourse with one we love, we wish to have answered those questions at the end of which we do not raise our voice; against which we put no interrogation-mark, - answered with the same unfailing, universal aim toward every point of the compass.

I require that thou knowest everything without being told anything. I parted from my beloved because there was one thing which I had to tell her. She *questioned* me. She should have known all by sympathy. That I had to tell her was the difference between us, - the misunderstanding.

A lover never hears anything that is told, for that is commonly either false or stale; but he hears things taking place, as the sentinels heard Trenck mining in the ground, and thought it was moles.<…>

The lover wants no partiality. He says, be so kind as to be just.

Canst thou love with thy mind,
And reason with the heart?
Canst thou be kind,
And from thy darling part?

Canst thou range earth, sea, and air,
And so meet me everywhere?
Through all events I will pursue thee,
Through all persons I will woo thee.

I need thy hate as much as thy love. Thou wilt not repel me entirely when thou repellest what is evil in me. <…>

It is not enough that we are truthful; we must cherish and carry out high purposes to be truthful about.

It must be rare, indeed, that we meet with one to whom we are prepared to be ideally related, as she to us. We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that society; we should have no duty aside from that. One who could bear to be so wonderfully and beautifully exaggerated every day. I would take my friend out of her low self and set her higher, infinitely higher, and *there* know her. But, commonly, men are as much afraid of love as of hate. They have lower engagements. They have near ends to serve. They have not imagination

enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be coopering a barrel, forsooth. <…>

The object of love expands and grows before us to eternity, until it includes all that is lovely, and we become all that can love.

### 1. **Words and word combinations to be memorized**

abandonment (n), anticipation (n), ardent (a), ascending (a), aspire (v), assign (v), barrel (n), brood (v), calyx (n), coarseness (n), commonness (n), confide (v), discending (a), discernment (n), divulged (a), fathom (v), fragrance (n), humbly (adv), intense (a), medium (n), ordeal (n), palate (a), palatable (a), perchance (v), profound (a), partiality (n), retrospective (a), repel (v), transcendent (a)

to be attached to one another, to have reserve, to be disgusted, by sympathy

### 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. What the essential difference between man and woman is that they should be thus attracted to one another, no one has satisfactorily answered. Perhaps we must acknowledge the justness of the distinction which assigns to man the sphere of wisdom, and to woman that of love, though neither belongs exclusively to either.
2. The lover sees in the glance of his beloved the same beauty that in the sunset paints the western skies. It is the same diamond, here lurking under a human eyelid, and there under the closing eyelids of the day.
3. **…** love is no individual experience; and though we are imperfect mediums, it does not partake of our imperfection; though we are finite, it is infinite and eternal; …
4. Love is a severe critic. Hate can pardon more than love. They, who aspire to love worthily, subject themselves to an ordeal more rigid than any other.

5. Love must be as much a light as a flame.

6. A man of fine perception is more truly feminine than a merely sentimental woman. The heart is blind, but Love is not blind. None of the gods is so discriminating.

7. Love is the profoundest of secrets. Divulged, even to the beloved, it is no longer Love.

8. It is not enough that we are truthful; we must cherish and carry out high purposes to be truthful about.

9. But, commonly, men are as much afraid of love as of hate. They have lower engagements.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. Man is continually saying to woman, Why will you not be more wise? Woman is continually saying to man, Why will you not be more loving? It is not in their wills to be wise or to be loving; but, unless each is both wise and loving, there can be neither wisdom nor love.

2. The maiden conceals a fairer flower and sweeter fruit than any calyx in the field; and, if she goes with averted face, confiding in her purity and high resolves, she will make the heavens retrospective, and all nature humbly confess its queen.

3. Perhaps an instinct survives through the intensest actual love, which prevents entire abandonment and devotion, and makes the most ardent lover a little reserved. It is the anticipation of change. For the most ardent lover is not the less practically wise, and seeks a love which will last forever.

4. I require that thou knowest everything without being told anything. I parted from my beloved because there was one thing which I had to tell her. She *questioned* me. She should have known all by sympathy.

5. It must be rare, indeed, that we meet with one to whom we are prepared to be ideally related, as she to us. We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that society; we should have no duty aside from that.

### 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. What are common questions that men and women ask each other?
3. How is all transcendent goodness appreciated?
4. Why is there something trivial in the commonness of love at first thought?
5. What qualities of love does the author try to disclose in the essay? Are you of the same opinion about the qualities of love? Give your reasons.
6. How does the author characterize the relationships between the beloved? Comment on the examples he gives.
7. Comment on the statement that men are as much afraid of love as of hate.
8. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
9. Comment on the individual style of H.D. Thoreau. Present the final text interpretation.

## Mark Twain (1835 – 1910)

***Biographical Notes****. The great American humorist, lecturer, and writer was born in Hannibal, Missouri on the Mississippi river. His real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. The son of a rather unsuccessful lawyer he did not attend University, but began working after leaving school in 1847. He had a series of jobs in many places in the United States. When he worked as a pilot on the Mississippi, he was inspired to write his best-known works "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1876) and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" (1884). During the Civil War, he became a Confederate solder for a short time. After the war his reputation began to grow. He made humorous publications in various newspapers*

*and magazines. He wrote under the pseudonym Mark Twain, a term from his riverboat days meaning "two fathoms deep" or "safe water". His travelogue "The Innocents Abroad" (1869) was a great success too, and defined a certain type of purely "American" humor that Twain pioneered. In 1870 he married Olivia Langdon and they moved to Connecticut, where he continued to dedicate himself to writing. Among many works that he published during his lifetime, the most popular are "Life on the Mississippi", "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"(1889) and "The Tragedy of Pud 'nhead Wilson" (1894). The following paragraph is taken from "Life on the Mississippi", a somewhat autobiographical account of Twain's steamboat pilot apprenticeship that celebrates the river and anticipates his greatest novel "Huck Finn".*

## Steamboat Landing

Once a day, a cheap, gaudy packet arrived from St. Louis, and another downward from Keokuk. Before these events, the day was glorious with expectancy; after them, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so; one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the walls, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep – with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk, doing a good business in watermelon rinds and seeds; two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee"; as pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them; the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away on the other side; the "point"

above the town, and the “point” below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one. Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote “points”; instantly a negro drayman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice, lifts up the cry, “S-t-e-a-m-boat a-comin’!” and the scene changes! The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving. Drays, carts, men, boys, all go hurrying from many quarters to a common center; the wharf. Assembled there, the people fasten their eyes upon the boat as wonder they are seeing for the first time.

### 1. **Words and word combinations to be memorized**

cant (n), dray (n), freight (a), gaudy (a), lapping (n), levee (n), prodigious (a), rind (n), skid (n), slouch (v), stir (v), wavelet (n), wharf (n)

to tilt back, to be scattered, to be slouched over

### 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. Before these events, the day was glorious with expectancy; after them, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this.

**2.** Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote “points”; instantly a negro drayman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice, lifts up the cry, “S-t-e-a-m-boat a-comin’!” and the scene changes!

3. The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving.

4. Assembled there, the people fasten their eyes upon the boat as wonder they are seeing for the first time.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; …

2. ….the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away on the other side; the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. How does the arrival of the steamboat influence on the life of the village?
3. What do we learn from this text about the economics of river villages in America of the 19th century?
4. Why does Twain give most of his descriptions in one long sentence? What descriptive details are most striking to you?
5. Comment on the comparison and contrast between the time before the boat arrives and the time its arrival is imminent?
6. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
7. Present the final text interpretation.

## Corn-pone Opinions

Fifty years ago, when I was a boy of fifteen and helping to inhabit a Missourian village on the banks of the Mississippi, I had a friend whose society was very dear to me because I was forbidden by my mother to partake of it. He was a gay and impudent and satirical and delightful young black man – a slave – who daily preached sermons from the top of his master's woodpile, with me the sole audience. He imitated the pulpit style of the several clergymen of the village, and did it well, and with fine passion and energy. To me he was a wonder. I believed he was the

greatest orator in the United States and would some day be heard from. But it did not happen; in the distribution of rewards he was overlooked. It is the way in this world.

He interrupted his preaching, now and then to saw a stick of wood; but the sawing was a pretense – he did it with his mouth; exactly imitating the sound the bucksaw makes in shrieking its way through the wood. But it served its purpose; it kept the master from coming out to see how the work was getting along. I listened to the sermons from the open window of a lumber room at the back of the house. One of these texts was this:

"You tell me whar a man gits his corn pone, en I'll tell you what his 'pinion's is."

I can never forget it. It was deeply impressed upon me. By my mother. Not upon my memory, but elsewhere. She had slipped in upon while I was absorbed and not watching. The black philosopher's idea was that a man is not independent, and cannot afford views which might interfere with his bread and butter. If he would prosper, he must train with the majority; in matters of large moment, like politics and religion, he must think and feel with the bulk of his neighbors, or suffer damage in his social standing and in his business prosperities. He must restrict himself to corn-pone opinions – at least on the surface. He must get his opinions from other people; he must reason out none for himself; he must have no first-hand views.

I think Jerry was right, in the main, but I think he didn't go far enough.

1. It was his idea that a man conforms to the majority view of his locality by calculation and intention.

This happens, but I think it is not the rule.

2. It was his idea that there is such a thing as a first-hand opinion; an original opinion; an opinion which is coldly reasoned out in a man's head, by a searching analysis of the facts involved, with the heart un-consulted, and the jury room closed against outside influences. It may be that such an opinion has been borne somewhere, at some time or other, but I suppose it got away before they could catch it and stuff it and put it in the museum.

I am persuaded that a coldly-thought-out and independent verdict upon a

fashion in clothes, or manners, or literature, or politics, or religion, or any other matter that is projected into the field of our notice and interest, is a most rare thing – if it has indeed ever existed.

A new thing in costume appears – the flaring hoopskirt, for example – and the passers-by are shocked, and the irreverent laugh. Six months later everybody is reconciled; the fashion has established itself; it is admired, now, and is happy in it. Why? Was the resentment reasoned out? Was the acceptance reasoned out? No. The instinct that moves to conformity did the work. It is our nature to conform; it is a force which not many can successfully resist. What is its seat? The inborn requirement of self - approval. We all have to bow to that; there are no exceptions. Even the woman who refuses from first to last to wear the hoopskirt comes under that law and is its slave; she could not wear the skirt and have her own approval; and that she *must* have, she cannot help herself. But as a rule our self approval has its source in but one place and not elsewhere – the approval of other people. A person of vast consequences can introduce any kind of novelty in dress and the general world will presently adopt it – moved to do it, in the first place, by the natural instinct to passively yield to that vague something recognized as authority, and in the second place by the human instinct to train with the multitude and have its approval. An empress introduced the hoopskirt, and we know the result. If Eve should come again, in her ripe renown, and reintroduce her quaint styles – well, we know what would happen. And we should be cruelly embarrassed, along at first.

The hoopskirt runs its course and disappears. Nobody reasons about it. One woman abandons the fashion; her neighbor notices this and follows her lead; this influences the next woman; and so on and so on, and presently the skirt has vanished out of the world, no one knows how nor why, nor cares for that matter. It will come again, by and by and in due course will go again.

Twenty-five years ago, in England, six or eight wine glasses stood grouped by each person’s plate at a dinner party, and they were used, not left idle and empty; to-day there are but three or four in the group, and the average guest sparingly uses about two of them. We have not adopted this new fashion yet, but we shall do it

presently. We shall not think it out; we shall merely conform, and let it go at that. We get our notions and habits and opinions from outside influences; we do not have to study them out.

Our table manners, and company manners, and street manners change from time to time, but the changes are not reasoned out; we merely notice and conform. We are creatures of outside influences; as a rule we do not think, we only imitate. We cannot invent standards that we stick; what we mistake for standards are only fashions, and perishable. We may continue to admire them, but we drop the use of them. We notice this in literature. Shakespeare is a standard, and fifty years ago we used to write tragedies which we couldn't tell from – from somebody else's; but we don't do it any more, now. Our prose standard, three quarters of a century ago, was ornate and diffuse; some authority or other changed it in the direction of compactness and simplicity, and conformity followed, without argument. The historical novel starts up suddenly, and sweeps the land. Everybody writes one, and the nation is glad. We had historical novels before; but nobody read them, and the rest of us conformed – without reasoning it out. We are conforming in the other way, now, because it is another case of everybody.

The outside influences are always pouring in upon us, and we are always obeying their orders and accepting their verdicts. The Smiths like the new play; the Joneses go to see it, and they copy the Smith verdict. Morals, religions, politics, get their following from surrounding influences and atmospheres, almost entirely; not from study, not from thinking. A man must and will have his first approval first of all, in each and every moment and circumstance of his life – even if he must repent of a self-approved act the moment after its commission, in order to get his self-approval again: but, speaking in general terms, a man's self-approval in the large concerns of his life has its source in the approval of the peoples about him, and not in a searching personal examination of the matter. Mohammedans are Mohammedans because they are born and reared among that sect, not because they have thought it out and can furnish sound reasons for being Mohammedans; we know why Catholics are Catholics; why Presbyterians are Presbyterians; why

Baptists are Baptists; why Mormons are Mormons; why thieves are thieves; why monarchists are monarchists; why Republicans are republicans and Democrats, Democrats. We know it is a matter of association and sympathy, not reasoning and examination; that hardly a man in the world has an opinion upon morals, politics, or religion which he got otherwise than through his associations and sympathies. Broadly speaking, there are none but corn-pone opinions. And broadly speaking, corn-pone stands for self-approval. Self-approval is acquired mainly from the approval of other people. The result is conformity. Sometimes conformity has a sordid business interest – the bread-and-butter-interest – but not in most cases, I think. I think that in the majority of cases it is unconscious and not calculated; that it is born of the human being's natural yearning to stand well with his fellows and have their inspiring approval and praise – a yearning which is commonly so strong and so insistent that it cannot be effectually resisted, and must have its way.

A political emergency brings out the corn-pone opinion in fine force in its two chief varieties – the pocketbook variety, which has its origin in self-interest, and the bigger variety, the sentimental variety – the one which can't bear to be outside the pale; can't bear to be in disfavor; can't endure the averted face and the cold shoulder; wants to stand well with his friends, wants to be smiled upon, wants to be welcome, wants to hear the precious words, "*He's* on the right track!" Uttered, perhaps by an ass, but still an ass of high degree, an ass whose approval is gold and diamonds to a smaller ass, and confers glory and honor and happiness, and membership in the herd. For these gauds many a man will dump his life-long principles into the street, and his conscience along with them. We have seen it happen. In some millions of instances.

Men think they think upon great political questions, and they do; but they think with their party, not independently; they read its literature, but not that of the other side; they arrive at convictions, but they are drawn from a partial view of the matter in hand and are of no particular value. They swarm with party, they feel with their party, they are happy in their party's approval; and where the party leads they will follow, whether the right and honor, or through blood and dirt and a mush of

mutilated morals.

In our late canvass half of the nation passionately believed that in silver lay salvation, the other half as passionately believed that that way lay destruction. Do you believe that tenth part of people, on either side, had any rational excuse for having an opinion about the matter at all? I studied that mighty question to the bottom – came out empty. Half of our people passionately believe in high tariff, the other half believe otherwise. Does this mean study and examination, or only feeling? The latter, I think. I have deeply studied that question, too – and didn't arrive. We all do no end of feeling, and we mistake it for thinking. And out of it we get an aggregation which we consider a boon. Its name is public opinion. It is held in reverence. It settles everything. Some think it the Voice of God.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

abandon (v), adopt (v), boomer (n), boon (n), bucksaw (n), confer (v), conform (v), conformity (n), dump (v), emergency (n), flaring (a), gaud (n), herd (n), hoopskirt (n), impudent (a), irreverent (a), musk (n), prosperity (n), pulpit (n), quaint (a), rear (v), reward (n), salvation (n), saw (v), sect (n), sordid (a), track (n), woodpile (n), yield (v)

to arrive at conviction, to be impressed upon somebody, to be reasoned out, to be reconciled, to be on the right track, bread-and-butter interest, by calculation, to come under law, to slip in

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. To me he was a wonder. I believed he was the greatest orator in the United States and would some day be heard from. But it did not happen; in the distribution of rewards he was overlooked. It is the way in this world.

2. It was his idea that a man conforms to the majority view of his locality by calculation and intention. This happens, but I think it is not the rule.

3. It was his idea that there is such a thing as a first-hand opinion; an original

opinion; an opinion which is coldly reasoned out in a man's head, by a searching analysis of the facts involved, with the heart un-consulted, and the jury room closed against outside influences. It may be that such an opinion has been borne somewhere, at some time or other, but I suppose it got away before they could catch it and stuff it and put it in the museum.

4. I am persuaded that a coldly-thought-out and independent verdict upon a fashion in clothes, or manners, or literature, or politics, or religion, or any other matter that is projected into the field of our notice and interest, is a most rare thing – if it has indeed ever existed.

5. The instinct that moves to conformity did the work. It is our nature to conform; it is a force which not many can successfully resist.

6. A person of vast consequences can introduce any kind of novelty in dress and the general world will presently adopt it – moved to do it, in the first place, by the natural instinct to passively yield to that vague something recognized as authority, and in the second place by the human instinct to train with the multitude and have its approval.

7. We get our notions and habits and opinions from outside influences; we do not have to study them out.

8. Morals, religions, politics, get their following from surrounding influences and atmospheres, almost entirely; not from study, not from thinking.

9. And broadly speaking, corn-pone stands for self-approval. Self-approval is acquired mainly from the approval of other people. The result is conformity.

10. Men think they think upon great political questions, and they do; but they think with their party, not independently; they read its literature, but not that of the other side; they arrive at convictions, but they are drawn from a partial view of the matter in hand and are of no particular value.

## 2. **Paraphrase the following sentences from the text**

1. He was a gay and impudent and satirical and delightful young black man – a slave – who daily preached sermons from the top of his master's woodpile, with

me the sole audience. He imitated the pulpit style of the several clergymen of the village, and did it well, and with fine passion and energy.

2. He interrupted his preaching, now and then to saw a stick of wood; but the sawing was a pretense – he did it with his mouth; exactly imitating the sound the bucksaw makes in shrieking its way through the wood. But it served its purpose; it kept the master from coming out to see how the work was getting along.

3. The black philosopher's idea was that a man is not independent, and cannot afford views which might interfere with his bread and butter. If he would prosper, he must train with the majority; in matters of large moment, like politics and religion, he must think and feel with the bulk of his neighbors, or suffer damage in his social standing and in his business prosperities. He must restrict himself to corn-pone opinions – at least on the surface.

4. Even the woman who refuses from first to last to wear the hoopskirt comes under that law and is its slave; she could not wear the skirt and have her own approval; and that she *must* have, she cannot help herself. But as a rule our self approval has its source in but one place and not elsewhere – the approval of other people.

5. Our table manners, and company manners, and street manners change from time to time, but the changes are not reasoned out; we merely notice and conform. We are creatures of outside influences; as a rule we do not think, we only imitate. We cannot invent standards that we stick; what we mistake for standards are only fashions, and perishable.

6. In our late canvass half of the nation passionately believed that in silver lay salvation, the other half as passionately believed that that way lay destruction. Do you believe that tenth part of people, on either side, had any rational excuse for having an opinion about the matter at all? I studied that mighty question to the bottom – came out empty.

## **4**. **Questions of method and strategy**

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. What kind of friend did the author of the essay have many years ago? Why was he a wonder to the author of the essay?
3. What did the black “philosopher” speak about? Why did the author of the essay think that he did not go far enough in his philosophy? What were his reasons?
4. Comment on the words: 1. “We are creatures of outside influences; as a rule we do not think, we only imitate.” 2. “The outside influences are always pouring in upon us, and we are always obeying their orders and accepting their verdicts.”
5. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.

6. Comment on the individual style of M. Twain. Present the final text interpretation.

## William Henry Hudson (1841 – 1922)

***Biographical Notes***. *William Henry Hudson (August 4, 1841 – August 18, 1922) was an Argentine-British author, naturalist and ornithologist. Hudson was born of U.S. parents living in Argentina. He spent his youth studying the local flora and fauna and observing both natural and human dramas on what was then a lawless frontier. He settled in England in 1869. He produced a series of ornithological studies, including “Argentine Ornithology” (1888 – 1899) and “British Birds” (1895), and later achieved fame with his books on the English countryside, including “Hampshire Days” (1903) and “Afoot in England”(1909), which helped foster and back to nature movement of the 1920s and 1930s. He was founder member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. His best known novel is “Green Mansions”(1904), and his best known and loved non-fiction is “Far Away and Long Ago” (1931). In Argentina he is considered to belong to the national literature as Guillermo Enrique Hudson, the Spanish translation of his name. A town in Berazategui Partido and several other public places and institutions are named after him.*

## Apple Blossom in a Lost Village

The apple has not come to its perfection this season until the middle of May; even here, in this west country, the very home of the spirit of the apple tree! Now it is, or seems, all the more beautiful because of its lateness, and of an April of snow and sleet and east winds, the bitter feeling of which is hardly yet out of our blood. If I could recover the image of all the flowering apple trees I have ever looked delightedly at, adding those pictured by poets and painters, including that one beneath which Fiammetta is standing, forever, with that fresh glad face almost too beautiful for earth, looking out as from pink and white clouds of the multitudinous blossoms – if I could see all that, indescribable in its loveliness, it is like all other sights in nature which wake in us a sense of the supernatural. Undoubtedly the apple trees seem more beautiful to us than all other blossoming trees, in all lands we have visited, just because it is so common, so universal – I mean in this west country – so familiar a sight to everyone from infancy, on which account it has more associations of a tender and beautiful kind than the others. For however beautiful it may be intrinsically, the greatness share of the charm is due to the memories that have come to be part of and one with it – the *forgotten memories* they may be called. For they mostly refer to a far period in our lives, to our early years, to days and events that were happy and sad. The events themselves have faded from the mind, but they registered an emotion, cumulative in its effect, which endures and revives from time to time and is that indefinable feeling, that tender melancholy and "divine despair," and those idle tears of which the poet says, "I know not what they mean," which gather to the eyes at the sight of happy autumn fields and of all lovely natural sights familiar from of old.

To-day, however, looking at the apple blossoms, I find the most beautifying associations and memories not in a far-off past, but in visionary apple trees seen no longer ago than last autumn!

And this how it comes about. In this red and green country of Devon I am apt to meet with adventures quite unlike those experienced in other countries, only they are mostly adventures of the spirit.

Lying awake at six o'clock last October, in Exeter, and seeing it was a grey misty morning, my inclination was to sleep again. I only dozed and was in the twilight condition when the mind is occupied with idle images and is now in the waking world, now in the dreamland. A thought of the rivers in the red and green country floated through my brain – of the Clyst among others; then of the villages on the Clyst; of Broadclyst, Clyst St. Mary, Clyst St. Lawrence, finally of Clyst Hyden; and although dozing I half laughed to remember how I went searching for that same village last May and how I wouldn't ask my way of anyone, just because it was Clyst Hyden, because the name of that little hidden rustic village had been written in the hearts of some who had passed away long ago, far from home: - how then could I fail to find it? – It would draw my feet like a magnet.

I remembered how I searched among deep lanes, beyond rows and rows of ancient hedgerow elms, and how I found its little church and thatched cottages at last, covered with ivy and roses and creeps, all in a white and pink cloud of apple blossoms. Searching for it had been great fun and finding it a delightful experience; why not have the pleasure once more now that it was May again and the apple orchards in blossom? No sooner had I asked myself the question that I was on my bicycle among those same deep lanes, with the unkept hedges and the great hedgerow elms shutting out a view of the country, searching once more for the village of Clyst Hyden. And as on the occasion, years ago it seemed, I would not enquire my way of anyone. I had found it then for myself and was determined to do so again, although I had set out with the vaguest idea as to the right direction.

But hours went by and I could not find it, and now it was growing late. Through a gap in the hedge I saw the great red globe of the sun quite near the horizon, and immediately after seeing it I was in a narrow road with a green border,

which stretched away straight before me further than I could see. Then the thatched cottages of a village came into sight; all were on one side of the road, and the setting sun flaming through the trees had kindled road and trees and cottages to a shining golden flame.

"This is it!" I cried. " This is my little lost village found again, and it is well I found it so late in the day, for now it looks less like even the loveliest old village in Devon than one in Fairyland, or in Beulah.

When I came near it that sunset splendor did not pass off and it was indeed like no earthly village; then people came out from the houses to gaze at me, and they too were like people glorified with the sunset light and their faces shone as they advanced hurriedly to meet me, pointing with their hands and talking and laughing excitedly as if my arrival among them had been an event of great importance. In a moment they surrounded and crowded round me, and sitting still among them looking from radiant face to face I at length found my speech and exclaimed, "O how beautiful!"

Then a girl pressed forward from among the others, and putting up her hand she placed it on my temple, the fingers resting on my forehead; and gazing with a strange earnestness in my eyes she said: "Beautiful? – Only that! Do you see nothing more?"

I answered, looking back into her eyes: "Yes – I think there is something more but I don't know what it is. Does it come from you – your eyes – your voice, all this that is passing in my mind?"

"What is passing in your mind?" she asked.

"I don't know. Thoughts – perhaps memories: hundreds, thousands – they come and go like lightning so that I can't arrest them – not even one!"

She laughed, and the laugh was like her eyes and her voice and the touch of her hand on my temples. Was it sad or glad? I don't know, but it was the most beautiful sound I had ever heard, yet it seemed familiar and stirred me in the strangest way.

"Let me think!" I said.

"Yes, think!" they all together cried laughingly; and then instantly when I cast my eyes down there was a perfect stillness as if they were all holding their breath and watching me.

That sudden strange stillness startled me: I lifted my eyes and they were gone – the radiant beautiful people who had surrounded and interrogated me, and with them their shining golden village, had all vanished. There was no village, no deep green lanes and pink and white clouds of apple blossoms, and it was not May, it was late October and I was lying in bed in Exeter seeing through the window the red and grey roofs and chimneys and pale misty white sky.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

hedgerow (n), intrinsically (adv), kindle (v), multitudinous (a), sleet (n), splendor (n), thatched (a)

all the more, to be apt to do something, to press forward from among somebody.

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. If I could recover the image of all the flowering apple trees I have ever looked delightedly at, adding those pictured by poets and painters, including that one beneath which Fiammetta is standing, forever, with that fresh glad face almost too beautiful for earth, looking out as from pink and white clouds of the multitudinous

blossoms – if I could see all that, indescribable in its loveliness, it is like all other sights in nature which wake in us a sense of the supernatural.

2. Undoubtedly the apple trees seem more beautiful to us than all other blossoming trees, in all lands we have visited, just because it is so common, so universal …

3. For however beautiful it may be intrinsically, the greatness share of the charm is due to the memories that have come to be part of and one with it – the *forgotten memories* they may be called.

4. In this red and green country of Devon I am apt to meet with adventures quite unlike those experienced in other countries, only they are mostly adventures of the spirit.

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5. I only dozed and was in the twilight condition when the mind is occupied with idle images and is now in the waking world, now in the dreamland.

6. And as on the occasion, years ago it seemed, I would not enquire my way of anyone. I had found it then for myself and was determined to do so again, although I had set out with the vaguest idea as to the right direction.

7. “This is it!” I cried. “This is my little lost village found again, and it is well I found it so late in the day, for now it looks less like even the loveliest old village in Devon than one in Fairyland, or in Beulah.

8. “What is passing in your mind?” she asked. “I don’t know. Thoughts – perhaps memories: hundreds, thousands – they come and go like lightning so that I can’t arrest them – not even one!”

9. There was no village, no deep green lanes and pink and white clouds of apple blossoms, and it was not May, it was late October and I was lying in bed in Exeter seeing through the window the red and grey roofs and chimneys and pale misty white sky.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

**1.** Now it is, or seems, all the more beautiful because of its lateness, and of an April of snow and sleet and east winds, the bitter feeling of which is hardly yet out of our blood.

2. The events themselves have faded from the mind, but they registered an emotion, cumulative in its effect, which endures and revives from time to time …

3. To-day, however, looking at the apple blossoms, I find the most beautifying associations and memories not in a far-off past, but in visionary apple trees seen no longer ago than last autumn!

4. And as on the occasion, years ago it seemed, I would not enquire my way of anyone. I had found it then for myself and was determined to do so again, although I had set out with the vaguest idea as to the right direction.

5. Then a girl pressed forward from among the others, and putting up her hand she placed it on my temple, the fingers resting on my forehead; and gazing with a strange earnestness in my eyes she said: “Beautiful? – only that! Do you see nothing more?”

6. That sudden strange stillness startled me: I lifted my eyes and they were gone – the radiant beautiful people who had surrounded and interrogated me, and with them their shining golden village, had all vanished.

### 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. What place does the author think to be the home of the spirit of the apple tree?

3. What sights in nature wake in people the sense of supernatural? Why do blossoming apple trees awake forgotten memories?

4. Why do people sometimes shed idle tears the meaning of which nobody understands?

5. What associations and memories did the author have looking one day at apple blossoms?

6. Why was the village Clyst Hyden so dear to the author's heart? How did he manage to find it a year ago?

7. Comment on the author's dream.

8. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.

9. Comment on W.H. Hudson's individual style of. Present the final text interpretation.

## William Faulkner (1897 – 1962)

***Biographical notes.*** *William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Missiissipp, in 1897, as the Old South lay already dying. When Faulkner himself lay dying, in 1962 in Oxford, Mississippi – the lifelong home that Faulkner's novels had mythologized into the Southern Camelot –the Old South of rural communities, close family ties, and traditional values was being resurrected as the prosperous, more materialistic, industrialized New South. Coming of age as a writer in this time of cultural transition, Faulkner came to understand not only his native South but America as well.*

*Faulkner dropped out of the University of Mississippi after his freshman year to travel and work at odd jobs. Although he appeared on the surface to be a loafer (he was fired from his post-office job at Ole Miss for inattentiveness) and a drifter, he was on a deeper level hard at work, writing and rewriting the novels for which he*

*was to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1950: "The Sound and the Fury (1929), "As I Lay Dying"(1930), "Light in August"(1934), "Absalom, Absalom"(1936), and "Go Down, Moses" (1942). His literary success came late, and with great difficulty, for Faulkner's innovative style, sympathetic stand on racial integration, bizarre characters, and sometimes sensational subject matter initially shocked the public (in 1930 one editor rejected "Sanctuary", saying if he published it "we'd both be in jail") and repelled the critics.*

*Faulkner's writing is characterized by two styles, often intermingled. His 9nformal style employs simple vocabulary and straightforward syntax; his fare more formal style, in which "The American Dream" was written, has long complicated sentences expressing complex and sometimes seemingly contradictory ideas intended to reflect the complexity and intensity of "the human heart in conflict with itself".*

## The American Dream

This was the American Dream: a sanctuary on the earth for individual man: a condition in which he could be free not only of the old established closed-corporation hierarchies of arbitrary power which had oppressed him as a mass, but free of that mass into which the hierarchies of church and state had compressed and held him individually thrilled and individually impotent.

A dream simultaneous among the separate individuals of men so asunder and scattered as to have no contact to match dreams and hopes among the old nations of the Old World which existed as nations not on citizenship but subjectship, which endured only on the premise of size and docility of the subject mass; the individual men and women who said as with one simultaneous voice: "We will establish a new land where man can assume that every individual man – not the mass of men but an individual man – has inalienable right to individual dignity and freedom within a fabric of individual courage and honorable work and mutual responsibility."

Not just an idea but a condition: a living human condition designed be coeval with the birth of American itself, engendered created and simultaneous with the very

birth of America itself, engendered created and simultaneous with the very air and word America, which at that one stroke, one instant, should cover the whole earth with one simultaneous suspiration like air or light. And it was, it did: radiating outward to cover even the old weary repudiated still-thralled nation, until individual men everywhere, who had no more than heard the name, let alone knew where America was, could respond to it, lifting up not only their hearts but the hopes too which until now they did not know – or anyway dared not remember – that they possessed.

A condition in which every man would not only not be a king, he wouldn't even want to be one. He wouldn't even need to bother to need to be the equal of kings because now he was free of kings and all their similar congeries; free not only of the symbols but of the old arbitrary hierarchies themselves which the pupper-symbols represented – courts and cabinets and churches and schools – to which he had been valuable nor as an individual but only as that integer, his value compounded in that immutable ratio to his sheer mindless numbers, that animal increase of his will-less and docile mass.

The dream, the hope, the condition which our forefathers, did not bequeath to us, their heirs and assigns, but rather bequeathed us, their successors, to the dream and hope. We were not even given the chance then to accept or decline the dream, for the reason that the dream already owned and possessed us at birth. It was not our heritage because we were its, we ourselves heired in our successive generations to the dream by the idea of the dream. And not only we, their sons born and bred in America, but men born and bred in the old alien `repudiated lands, also felt that breath, that air, heard that promise, that proffer that there was such a thing as hope for individual man. And the old nations themselves, so old and so long-fixed in the old concepts of man as to have thought themselves beyond all hope of change, making oblation to that new dream of that new concept of man by gifts of monuments and devices to mark the portals of that inalienable right and hope: "There is room for you here from about the earth, for all ye individually homeless, individually oppressed, individually unindividualised."…

… That dream was man's aspiration in the true meaning of the word aspiration. It was not merely the blind and voiceless hope of his heart: it was the actual inbreathe of the lungs, his lights, his living and unsleeping metabolism, so that we actually lived the Dream. We did not live in the dream: we lived the Dream itself, just as we do not merely live in air and climate, but we live Air and Climate; we ourselves individually representative of the Dream, the Dream itself actually audible in the strong uninhibited voices which were not afraid to speak *cliché* at the very top of them, giving *cliché*-avatars of "Give me liberty or give me death" or "This to be self-evident that all individual men were created equal in one mutual right to freedom" which had never lacked for truth anyway, assuming that hope and dignity are truth, a validity and immediacy absolving them even of *cliché.*

That was the Dream: not man created equal in the sense that he was created black or white or brown or yellow and hence doomed irrevocably to that for the remainder of his days – or rather, not doomed with equality but blessed with equality, himself lifting no hand but instead lying curled and drowsing in the warm and airless bath of it like the yet-wombed embryo; but liberty in which to have an equal start at equality with all other men, and freedom in which to defend and preserve that equality by means of the individual courage and the honorable work and the mutual responsibility. Then we lost it. It abandoned us, which had supported and protected and defended us while our new nation of new concepts of human existence got a firm enough foothold to stand erect among the nations of the earth, demanding nothing of us in return save to remember always that, being alive, it was therefore perishable and so must be held always in the unceasing responsibility and vigilance of courage and honor and pride and humility. It is gone now. We dosed, slept, and it abandoned us. And in that vacuum now there sound no longer the strong loud voices not merely unafraid but not even aware that fear existed, speaking in mutual unification of one mutual hope and will. Because now what we hear is a cacophony of terror and conciliation and compromise babbling only the mouthsounds; the loud and empty words which we have emasculated of all meaning whatever – freedom, democracy, patriotism – with which, awakened at last, we try

in desperation to hide from ourselves that loss …

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

alien (a), arbitrary (a), aspiration (n), assign (v), assume (v), asunder (v), avatar (n), babble (v), bequeath (v), coeval (a), compress (v), decline (v), dignity (n), docile (a), docility (n), embryo (n), endure (v), engendered (a), fabric (n), heritage (n), hierarchy (n), humility (n), immutable (a), inalienable (a), integer (n), irrevocably (adv), metabolism (n), oblation (n), perishable (a), portal (n), premise (n), puppet-symbol (n), ratio (n), repudiated (a), scatter (v), sheer (a), stroke (n), validity (n), vigilance (n)

to hold somebody thrilled, to be bred

## 3. Explain and expand on the following

**1.** This was the American Dream: a sanctuary on the earth for individual man: …

**2. …** the individual men and women who said as with one simultaneous voice: "We will establish a new land where man can assume that every individual man – not the mass of men but an individual man – has inalienable right to individual dignity and freedom …"

**3.** The dream, the hope, the condition which our forefathers, did not bequeath to us, their heirs and assigns, but rather bequeathed us, their successors, to the dream and hope.

4. And not only we, their sons born and bred in America, but men born and bred in the old alien `repudiated lands, also felt that breath, that air, heard that promise, that proffer that there was such a thing as hope for individual man.

5. … That dream was man's aspiration in the true meaning of the word aspiration.

6. We did not live in the dream: we lived the Dream itself, just as we do not merely live in air and climate, but we live Air and Climate; …

7. … liberty in which to have an equal start at equality with all other men, and freedom in which to defend and preserve that equality by means of the individual courage and the honorable work and the mutual responsibility.

8. We dosed, slept, and it abandoned us. And in that vacuum now there sound no longer the strong loud voices not merely unafraid but not even aware that fear existed, speaking in mutual unification of one mutual hope and will.

9. … now what we hear is a cacophony of terror and conciliation and compromise babbling only the mouthsounds; the loud and empty words which we have emasculated of all meaning whatever – freedom, democracy, patriotism – with which, awakened at last, we try in desperation to hide from ourselves that loss …

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

**1.** A dream simultaneous among the separate individuals of men so asunder and scattered as to have no contact to match dreams and hopes among the old nations of the Old World which existed as nations not on citizenship but subjectship, which endured only on the premise of size and docility of the subject mass; …

**2.** Not just an idea but a condition: a living human condition designed be coeval with the birth of American itself, engendered created and simultaneous with the very birth of America itself, engendered created and simultaneous with the very air and word America, which at that one stroke, one instant, should cover the whole earth with one simultaneous suspiration like air or light.

3. And the old nations themselves, so old and so long-fixed in the old concepts of man as to have thought themselves beyond all hope of change, making oblation to

that new dream of that new concept of man by gifts of monuments and devices to mark the portals of that inalienable right and hope: “There is room for you here from about the earth, for all ye individually homeless, individually oppressed, individually unindividualised.”…

**4.** That was the Dream: not man created equal in the sense that he was created black or white or brown or yellow and hence doomed irrevocably to that for the remainder of his days – or rather, not doomed with equality but blessed with equality, …

### 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. What was the American Dream like? What kind of new land did people want to establish? What position must an individual person occupy in a new society?
3. Was the American Dream bequeathed to the Americans by their forefathers? Was it their heritage?
4. What kind of liberty must exist in any civilized society?
5. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
6. Comment on the individual style of W. Faulkner. Present the final text interpretation.

## Elwyn Brooks White (1898-1985)

***Biographical Notes.*** *Elwyn Brooks White (July 12, 1899 - October 1, 1985) was an American essayist, author, and noted prose stylist. He is most famous today for a writers' style guide, The Elements of Style, and for three children's books generally considered to be classics of the field.*

*White was born in Mount Vernon, New York and graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1921. He spent several years working as a newspaper writer and ad man before returning to New York City in 1924 and*

*published his first article in the newly founded The New Yorker magazine in 1925, then joined the staff in 1927. This made him moderately famous for the next six decades as he produced a long series of essays and unsigned "Notes and Comments" that were widely read as the magazine grew in influence. He gradually became the most important contributor to" The New Yorker" at a time when it was arguably the most important American literary magazine. He served as a columnist for "Harper's Magazine" from 1938 to 1943. In the late 1930s he turned his hand to children's fiction on behalf of a niece. His first children's book "Stuart Little" was published in 1945, and Charlotte's Web appeared in 1952. Both were highly acclaimed, and in 1970 jointly won the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal, a major prize in the field of children's literature. In the same year, he published his third children's novel," The Trumpet of the Swan". In 1959 he edited and updated the classic The Elements of Style. Originally written and published in 1918 by William Strunk Jr, the book is a handbook of grammatical and stylistic dos and don'ts for written American English. White had studied under Strunk while at Cornell in the years following World War I. Further editions of the work followed in 1972, 1979, and 2000. It is a standard accessory for students and writers. White's style was stereotypically "Yankee": wry, understated, thoughtful, and informed. He was widely regarded as a master of the English language, noted for clear, well-constructed, and charming prose. In 1978 he was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize for his work as a whole. Other awards he received included a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, and memberships in a variety of literary societies throughout the United States. White married Katharine Sergeant Angell in 1929, also an editor at the magazine and author (as Katharine White) of "Onward and Upward in the Garden". He died on October 1, 1985 of Alzheimer's disease at his farm home in North Brookline, Maine.*

## Once More to the Lake

One summer, along about 1904, my father rented a camp on a lake in Maine (1)

and took us all there for the month of August. We all got ringworm from some kittens and had to rub Pond's Extract (2) on our arms and legs night and morning, and my father rolled over in a canoe with all his clothes on; but outside of that the vacation was a success and from then on none of us ever thought there was any place in the world like that lake in Maine. We returned summer after summer—always on August 1 for one month. I have since become a salt-water man, but sometimes in summer there are days when the restlessness of the tides and the fearful cold of the sea water and the incessant wind which blows across the afternoon and into the evening make me wish for the placidity of a lake in the woods. A few weeks ago this feeling got so strong I bought myself a couple of bass hooks and a spinner and returned to the lake where we used to go, for a week's fishing and to revisit old haunts.

I took along my son, who had never had any fresh water up his nose and who had seen lily pads only from train windows. On the journey over to the lake I began to wonder what it would be like. I wondered how time would have marred this unique, this holy spot—the coves and streams, the hills that the sun set behind, the camps and the paths behind the camps. I was sure that the tarred road would have found it out and I wondered in what other ways it would be desolated. It is strange how much you can remember about places like that once you allow your mind to return into the grooves which lead back. You remember one thing, and that suddenly reminds you of another thing. I guess I remembered clearest of all the early mornings, when the lake was cool and motionless, remembered how the bedroom smelled of the lumber it was made of and of the wet woods whose scent entered through the screen. The partitions in the camp were thin and did not extend clear to the top of the rooms, and as I was always the first up I would dress softly so as not to wake the others, and sneak out into the sweet outdoors and start out in the canoe, keeping close along the shore in the long shadows of the pines. I remembered being very careful never to rub my paddle against the gunwale for fear of disturbing the stillness of the cathedral.

The lake had never been what you would call a wild lake. There were cottages sprinkled around the shores, and it was in farming although the shores of the lake

were quite heavily wooded. Some of the cottages were owned by nearby farmers, and you would live at the shore and eat your meals at the farmhouse. That's what our family did. But although it wasn't wild, it was a fairly large and undisturbed lake and there were places in it which, to a child at least, seemed infinitely remote and primeval.

I was right about the tar: it led to within half a mile of the shore. But when I got back there, with my boy, and we settled into a camp near a farmhouse and into the kind of summertime I had known, I could tell that it was going to be pretty much the same as it had been before—I knew it, lying in bed the first morning, smelling the bedroom, and hearing the boy sneak quietly out and go off along the shore in a boat. I began to sustain the illusion that he was I, and therefore, by simple transposition, that I was my father. This sensation persisted, kept cropping up all the time we were there. It was not an entirely new feeling, but in this setting it grew much stronger. I seemed to be living a dual existence. I would be in the middle of some simple act, I would be picking up a bait box or laying down a table fork, or I would be saying something, and suddenly it would be not I but my father who was saying the words or making the gesture. It gave me a creepy sensation.

We went fishing the first morning. I felt the same damp moss covering the worms in the bait can, and saw the dragonfly alight on the tip of my rod as it hovered a few inches from the surface of the water. It was the arrival of this fly that convinced me beyond any doubt that everything was as it always had been, that the years were a mirage and there had been no years. The small waves were the same, chucking the rowboat under the chin as we fished at anchor, and the boat was the same boat, the same color green and the ribs broken in the same places, and under the floorboards the same freshwater leavings and debris—the dead helgramite, the wisps of moss, the rusty discarded fishhook, the dried blood from yesterday's catch. We stared silently at the tips of our rods, at the dragonflies that came and wells. I lowered the tip of mine into the water, tentatively, pensively dislodging the fly, which darted two feet away, poised, darted two feet back, and came to rest again a little farther up the rod. There

had been no years between the ducking of this dragonfly and the other one—the one that was part of memory. I looked at the boy, who was silently watching his fly, and it was my hands that held his rod, my eyes watching. I felt dizzy and didn't know which rod I was at the end of.

We caught two bass, hauling them in briskly as though they were mackerel, pulling them over the side of the boat in a businesslike manner without any landing net, and stunning them with a blow on the back of the head. When we got back for a swim before lunch, the lake was exactly where we had left it, the same number of inches from the dock, and there was only the merest suggestion of a breeze. This seemed an utterly enchanted sea, this lake you could leave to its own devices for a few hours and come back to, and find that it had not stirred, this constant and trustworthy body of water. In the shallows, the dark, water-soaked sticks and twigs, smooth and old, were undulating in clusters on the bottom against the clean ribbed sand, and the track of the mussel was plain. A school of minnows swam by, each minnow with its small, individual shadow, doubling the attendance, so clear and sharp in the sunlight. Some of the other campers were in swimming, along the shore, one of them with a cake of soap, and the water felt thin and clear and insubstantial. Over the years there had been this person with the cake of soap, this cultist, and here he was. There had been no years.

Up to the farmhouse to dinner through the teeming, dusty field, the road under our sneakers was only a two-track road. The middle track was missing, the one with the marks of the hooves and the splotches of dried, flaky manure. There had always been three tracks to choose from in choosing which track to walk in; now the choice was narrowed down to two. For a moment I missed terribly the middle alternative. But the way led past the tennis court, and something about the way it lay there in the sun reassured me; the tape had loosened along the backline, the alleys were green with plantains and other weeds, and the net (installed in June and removed in September) sagged in the dry noon, and the whole place steamed with midday heat and hunger and emptiness. There was a choice of pie for dessert, and one was

blueberry and one was apple, and the waitresses were the same country girls, there having been no passage of time, only the illusion of it as in a dropped curtain—the waitresses were still fifteen; their hair had been washed, that was the only difference-they had been to the movies and seen the pretty girls with the clean hair.

Summertime, oh summertime, pattern of life indelible, the fade proof lake, the woods unshatterable, the pasture with the sweet fern and the juniper forever and ever, summer without end; this was the background, and the life along the shore was the design, the cottages with their innocent and tranquil design, their tiny docks with the flagpole and the American flag floating against the white clouds in the blue sky, the little paths over the roots of the trees leading from camp to camp and the paths leading back to the outhouses and the can of lime for sprinkling, and at the souvenir counters at the store the miniature birch-bark canoes and the post cards that showed things looking a little better than they looked. This was the American family at play, escaping the city heat, wondering whether the newcomers at the camp at the head of the cove were "common" or "nice," wondering whether it was true that the people who drove up for Sunday dinner at the farmhouse were turned away because there wasn't enough chicken.

It seemed to me, as I kept remembering all this, that those times and those summers had been infinitely precious and worth saving. There had been jollity and peace and goodness. The arriving (at the beginning of August) had been so big a business in itself, at the railway station the farm wagon drawn up, the first smell of the pine-laden air, the first glimpse of the smiling farmer, and the great importance of the trunks and your father's enormous authority in such matters, and the feel of the wagon under you for the long ten-mile haul, and at the top of the last long hill catching the first view of the lake after eleven months of not seeing this cherished body of water. The shouts and cries of the other campers when they saw you, and the trunks to be unpacked, to give up their rich burden. (Arriving was less exciting nowadays, when you sneaked up in your car and parked it under a tree near the camp and took out the bags and in five minutes it was all over, no fuss, no loud wonderful

fuss about trunks.)

Peace and goodness and jollity. The only thing that was wrong now, really, was the sound of the place, an unfamiliar nervous sound of the outboard motors. This was the note that jarred, the one thing that would sometimes break the illusion and set the years moving. In those other summer times, all motors were inboard; and when they were at a little distance, the noise they made was a sedative, an ingredient of summer sleep. They were one-cylinder and two-cylinder engines, and some were make-and-break and some were jump-spark, but they all made a sleepy sound across the lake. The one-lungers throbbed and fluttered, and the twin-cylinder ones purred and purred, and that was a quiet sound too. But now the campers all had outboards. In the daytime, in the hot mornings, these motors made a petulant, irritable sound; at night, in the still evening when the afterglow lit the water, they whined about one's ears like mosquitoes. My boy loved our rented outboard, and his great desire was to achieve single-handed mastery over it, and authority, and he soon learned the trick of choking it a little (but not too much), and the adjustment of the needle valve. Watching him I would remember the things you could do with the old one-cylinder engine with the heavy flywheel, how you could have it eating out of your hand if you got really close to it spiritually. Motor boats in those days didn't have clutches, and you would make a landing by shutting off the motor at the proper time and coasting in with a dead rudder. But there was a way of reversing them, if you learned the trick, by cutting the switch and putting it on again exactly on the final dying revolution of the flywheel, so that it would kick back against compression and begin reversing. Approaching a dock in a strong following breeze, it was difficult to slow up sufficiently by the ordinary coasting method, and if a boy felt he had complete mastery over his motor, he was tempted to keep it running beyond its time and then reverse it a few feet from the dock. It took a cool nerve, because if you threw the switch a twentieth of a second too soon you would catch the flywheel when it still had speed enough to go up past center, and the boat would leap ahead, charging bull-fashion at the dock.

We had a good week at the camp. The bass were biting well and the sun shone endlessly, day after day. We would be tired at night and lie down in the accumulated heat of the little bedrooms after the long hot day and the breeze would stir almost imperceptibly outside and the smell of the swamp drift in through the rusty screens. Sleep would come easily and in the morning the red squirrel would be on the roof, tapping out his gay routine. I kept remembering everything, lying in bed in the mornings - the small steamboat that had a long rounded stern like the lip of a Ubangi, and how quietly she ran on the moonlight sails, when the older boys played their mandolins and the girls sang and we ate doughnuts dipped in sugar, and how sweet the music was on the water in the shining night, and what it had felt like to think about girls then. After breakfast we would go up to the store and the things were in the same place—the minnows in a bottle, the plugs and spinners disarranged and pawed over by the youngsters from the boys' camp, the Fig Newtons and the Beeman's gum. Outside, the road was tarred and cars stood in front of the store. Inside, all was just as it had always been, except there was more Coca Cola and not so much Moxie and root beer and birch beer and sarsaparilla. We would walk out with a bottle of pop apiece and sometimes the pop would backfire up our noses and hurt. We explored the streams, quietly, where the turtles slid off the sunny logs and dug their way into the soft bottom; and we lay on the town wharf and fed worms to the tame bass. Everywhere we went I had trouble making out which was I, the one walking at my side, the one walking in my pants.

One afternoon while we were there at that lake a thunderstorm came up. It was like the revival of an old melodrama that I had seen long ago with childish awe. The second-act climax of the drama of the electrical disturbance over a lake in America had not changed in any important respect. This was the big scene, still the big scene. The whole thing was so familiar, the first feeling of oppression and heat and a general air around camp of not wanting to go very far away. In mid-afternoon (it was all the same) a curious darkening of the sky, and a lull in everything that had made life tick; and then the way the boats suddenly swung the other way at their moorings

with the coming of a breeze out of the new quarter, and the premonitory rumble. Then the kettle drum, then the snare, then the bass drum and cymbals, then crackling light against the dark, and the gods grinning and licking their chops in the hills. Afterward the calm, the rain steadily rustling in the calm lake, the return of light and hope and spirits, and the campers running out in joy and relief to go swimming in the rain, their bright cries perpetuating the deathless joke about how they were getting simply drenched, and the children screaming with delight at the new sensation of bathing in the rain, and the joke about getting drenched linking the generations in a strong indestructible chain. And the comedian, who waded in carrying an umbrella.

When the others went swimming my son said he was going in too. He pulled his dripping trunks from the line where they had hung all through the shower, and wrung them out. Languidly, and with no thought of going in, I watched him, his hard little body, skinny and bare, saw him wince slightly as he pulled up around his vitals the small, soggy, icy garment. As he buckled the swollen belt suddenly my groin felt the chill of death.

## Commentary

**(1) Maine** – один из штатов США, расположен на берегу Атлантического океана, граничит с Канадой. **(2) Pond's Extract** – лекарство от стригущего лишая.

### 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

bass (n), buckle (v), canoe (n), debris (n), desolated (a), fern (n), groove (n), groin (n), gunwale (n), haunt (n), incessant (a), indelible (a), juniper (n), lumber (n), mackerel (n), mar (v), minnow (n), moss (n), paddle (n), partition (n), pensively (adv), petulant (a), placidity (n), primeval (a), rib (n), ringworm (n), salt-water (a), spinner (n), sprinkle (v), sustain (v), tar (n), tentatively (adv), undulate (v), unshatterable (a), mussel (n)

to crop up, to haul in, to sneak out, to start out, a school of minnows

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

**1.** A few weeks ago this feeling got so strong I bought myself a couple of bass hooks and a spinner and returned to the lake where we used to go, for a week's fishing and to revisit old haunts.

**2.** It is strange how much you can remember about places like that once you allow your mind to return into the grooves which lead back.

**3. …** lying in bed the first morning, smelling the bedroom, and hearing the boy sneak quietly out and go off along the shore in a boat. I began to sustain the illusion that he was I, and therefore, by simple transposition, that I was my father. This sensation persisted, kept cropping up all the time we were there.

**4.** I looked at the boy, who was silently watching his fly, and it was my hands that held his rod, my eyes watching. I felt dizzy and didn't know which rod I was at the end of.

**5.** Over the years there had been this person with the cake of soap, this cultist, and here he was. There had been no years.

**6.** Peace and goodness and jollity. The only thing that was wrong now, really, was the sound of the place, an unfamiliar nervous sound of the outboard motors. This was the note that jarred, the one thing that would sometimes break the illusion and set the years moving.

**7.** We had a good week at the camp.

**8.** Languidly, and with no thought of going in, I watched him, his hard little body, skinny and bare, saw him wince slightly as he pulled up around his vitals the small, soggy, icy garment. As he buckled the swollen belt suddenly my groin felt the chill of death.

## 3. **Paraphrase the following sentences from the text**

1. On the journey over to the lake I began to wonder what it would be like. I wondered how time would have marred this unique, this holy spot …

2. I have since become a salt-water man, but sometimes in summer there are days when the restlessness of the tides and the fearful cold of the sea water and the incessant wind which blows across the afternoon and into the evening make me wish for the placidity of a lake in the woods.

3. It was not an entirely new feeling, but in this setting it grew much stronger. I seemed to be living a dual existence.

4. It was the arrival of this fly that convinced me beyond any doubt that everything was as it always had been, that the years were a mirage and there had been no years.

5. Approaching a dock in a strong following breeze, it was difficult to slow up sufficiently by the ordinary coasting method, and if a boy felt he had complete mastery over his motor, he was tempted to keep it running beyond its time and then reverse it a few feet from the dock.

6. Everywhere we went I had trouble making out which was I, the one walking at my side, the one walking in my pants.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. Did father and his children enjoy their holiday on a lake in Maine one summer along about 1904? What was this place like? Why did they return there summer after summer for several years?
3. What made the author return to this place with his son many years later? In what ways do White's physical descriptions of the lake and its surroundings suggest why he loved the place? Analyze an example or two in which emotion is created by style.

4. Did father and son enjoy their holiday? How did they spend their time?

5. White says that he seemed to be living “a dual existence” as a father in the present and as a son in the remembered life of the past. Point to some moments when that dual existence seems most natural and to some when it seems more difficult to maintain. What seems to explain the difference to him and to you?

6. What makes the thunderstorm a good episode with which to end the essay? What earlier themes does the moment collect and connect?

7. What do you make of the final sentence of the essay? How is the earlier extended theme of annihilated time related to and resolved at the end of the essay?

8. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.

9. Comment on the author’s individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

## Robert Frost (1874 – 1963)

***Biographical Notes.*** *Named after the Confederate general, Robert (Lee) Frost was born in San Francisco, where his Harvard–educated father edited a newspaper and unsuccessfully dabbled in politics. When his father died in 1885, the family reclaimed its New England roots, moving, with the help of Frost’s grandfather, to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where Frost performed brilliantly in high school, sharing honors with his future wife. Higher education at Darmouth and then Harvard was short lived, though Frost would later acquire so many honorary degrees he had patchwork quilts designed out of all his academic hoods. Success came slowly: after years of farming and teaching, Frost moved at the age of thirty eight with his wife and four children to England, desperately wanting to launch a literary career. The plan worked. Frost published his first two volumes of poetry, “A Boy’s Will” (1913) and “North of Boston” (1914), to such acclaim that he quickly found an American publisher and returned to the States as a leading*

*poet courted by universities and the lecture circuit. Although Frosts family life remained deeply troubled by infant deaths, insanity, depression, and suicide, his literary reputation flourished steadily and culminated in a popularity no other American poet has ever experienced. Known primarily for his poetry, Frost nevertheless wrote many pithy, memorable essays.*

## The Figure a Poem Makes

ABSTRACTION is an old story with the philosophers, but it has been like a new toy in the hands of the artists of our day. Why can't we have any one quality of poetry we choose by itself? We can have in thought. Then it will go hard if we can't in practice. Our lives for it.

Granted no one but a humanist much cares how sound a poem is if it is only *a* sound. The sound is the gold in the ore. Then we will have the sound out alone and dispense with the inessential. We do till we make the discovery that the object in writing poetry is to make all poems sound as different as possible from each other, and the resources for that of vowels, consonants, punctuation, syntax, words, sentences, meter are not enough. We need the help of context — meaning — subject matter. That is the greatest help towards variety. All that can be done with words is soon told. So also with meters — particularly in our language where there are virtually but two, strict iambic and loose iambic. The ancients with many were still poor if they depended on meters for all tune. It is painful to watch our sprung-rhythmists straining at the point of omitting one short from a foot for relief from monotony. The possibilities for tune from the dramatic tones of meaning struck across the rigidity of a limited meter are endless. And we are back in poetry as merely one more art of having something to say, sound or unsound. Probably better if sound, because deeper and from wider experience.

Then there is this wildness whereof it is spoken. Granted again that it has an equal claim with sound to being a poem's better half. If it is a wild tune, it is a poem.

Our problem then is, as modern abstractionists, to have the wildness pure; to be wild with nothing to be wild about. We bring up as aberrationists, giving way to undirected associations and kicking ourselves from one chance suggestion to another in all directions as of a hot afternoon in the life of a grasshopper. Theme alone can steady us down. Just as the first mystery was how a poem could have a tune in such a straightness as meter, so the second mystery is how a poem can have wildness and at the same time a subject that shall be fulfilled.

It should be of the pleasure of a poem itself to tell how it can. The figure a poem makes. It begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love. No one can really hold that the ecstasy should be static and stand still in one place. It begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life — not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion. It has denouement. It has an outcome that though unforeseen was predestined from the first image of the original mood — and indeed from the very mood. It is but a trick poem and no poem at all if the best of it was thought of first and saved for the last. It finds its own name as it goes and discovers the best waiting for it in some final phrase at once wise and sad — the happy-sad blend of the drinking song.

No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader. For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew. I am in a place, in a situation, as if I had materialized from cloud or risen out of the ground. There is a glad recognition of the long lost and the rest follows. Step by step the wonder of unexpected supply keeps growing. The impressions most useful to my purpose seem always those I was unaware of and so made no note of at the time when taken, and the conclusion is come to that like giants we are always hurling experience ahead of us to pave the future with against the day when we may want to strike a line of purpose across it for somewhere. The line will have the more charm for not being mechanically straight. We enjoy the straight crookedness of

a good walking stick. Modern instruments of precision are being used to make things crooked as if by eye and hand in the old days.

I tell how there may be a better wildness of logic than of inconsequence. But the logic is backward, in retrospect, after the act. It must be more felt than seen ahead like prophecy. It must be a revelation, or a series of revelations, as much for the poet as for the reader. For it to be that there must have been the greatest freedom of the material to move about in it and to establish relations in it regardless of time and space, previous relation, and everything but affinity. We prate of freedom. We call our schools free because we are not free to stay away from them till we are sixteen years of age. I have given up my democratic prejudices and now willingly set the lower classes free to be completely taken care of by the upper classes. Political freedom is nothing to me. I bestow it right and left. All I would keep for myself is the freedom of my material — the condition of body and mind now and then to summons aptly from the vast chaos of all I have lived through.

Scholars and artists thrown together are often annoyed at the puzzle of where they differ. Both work from knowledge; but I suspect they differ most importantly in the way their knowledge is come by. Scholars get theirs with conscientious thoroughness along projected lines of logic; poets theirs cavalierly and as it happens in and out of books. They stick to nothing deliberately, but let what will stick to them like burrs where they walk in the fields. No acquirement is on assignment, or even self-assignment. Knowledge of the second kind is much more available in the wild free ways of wit and art. A school boy may be denned as one who can tell you what he knows in the order in which he learned it. The artist must value himself as he snatches a thing from some previous order in time and space into a new order with not so much as a ligature clinging to it of the old place where it was organic.

More than once I should have lost my soul to radicalism if it had been the originality it was mistaken for by its young converts. Originality and initiative are what I ask for my country. For myself the originality need be no more than the freshness of a poem run in the way I have described: from delight to wisdom. The figure is the same as for love. Like a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride

on its own melting. A poem may be worked over once it is in being, but may not be worried into being. Its most precious quality will remain its having run itself and carried away the poet with it. Read it a hundred times: it will forever keep its freshness as a metal keeps its fragrance. It can never lose its sense of a meaning that once unfolded by surprise as it went.

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

aberration (n), abstraction (n), acquirement (n), affinity (n), aptly (adv), bestow (v), burr (n), cavalierly (adv), conscientious (a), convert (n), crookedness (n), cult (n), denouement (n), dispense (v), ecstasy (n), fragrance (n), hurl (v), iambic (a), ore (n), prate (v), precision (n), prophecy (n), rigidity (n), sect (n), thoroughness (n)

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

**1.** ABSTRACTION is an old story with the philosophers, but it has been like a new toy in the hands of the artists of our day.

2. The sound is the gold in the ore.

**3.** Our problem then is, as modern abstractionists, to have the wildness pure; to be wild with nothing to be wild about.

**4.** Theme alone can steady us down. Just as the first mystery was how a poem could have a tune in such a straightness as meter, so the second mystery is how a poem can have wildness and at the same time a subject that shall be fulfilled.

**5.** It should be of the pleasure of a poem itself to tell how it can. The figure a poem makes. It begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love.

**6.** The impressions most useful to my purpose seem always those I was unaware of and so made no note of at the time when taken, and the conclusion is come to that like giants we are always hurling experience ahead of us to pave the future with against the day when we may want to strike a line of purpose across it for somewhere.

**7.** Like a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own melting. A poem may be worked over once it is in being, but may not be worried into being.

### 3. **Paraphrase the following sentences from the text**

**1. …** we make the discovery that the object in writing poetry is to make all poems sound as different as possible from each other, …

2. It is painful to watch our sprung-rhythmists straining at the point of omitting one short from a foot for relief from monotony.

3. We bring up as aberrationists, giving way to undirected associations and kicking ourselves from one chance suggestion to another in all directions as of a hot afternoon in the life of a grasshopper.

4. Scholars and artists thrown together are often annoyed at the puzzle of where they differ. Both work from knowledge; but I suspect they differ most importantly in the way their knowledge is come by. Scholars get theirs with conscientious thoroughness along projected lines of logic; poets theirs cavalierly and as it happens in and out of books.

5. More than once I should have lost my soul to radicalism if it had been the originality it was mistaken for by its young converts. Originality and initiative are what I ask for my country

### 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.

2. What is very important in writing poetry? What helps to make all poems sound differently? What is the greatest help towards variety?
3. What is tune? What are the possibilities for it?
4. What is mysterious in poetry?
5. Comment on the figure a poem makes and on the impressions it may produce.
6. Must poetry be a revelation both for readers and poets?
7. Comment on the author's understanding of the difference between poets and scholars.
8. What are the most important qualities of poetry?
9. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
10. Comment on the author's individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

## Katherine Anne Porter (1890–1980)

***Biographical Notes.*** *Katherine Anne Porter 1890–1980, American author, b. Indian Creek, Tex. Born in a log cabin in the frontier town of Indian Greek, Porter received a fragmentary education and as a young woman found work on various newspapers; she would later become the first female faculty member at Washington and Lee University. Although she published infrequently, she is regarded as a master of the short story. Her first book of stories, "Flowering Judas" (1930), received immediate recognition and critical acclaim. It was followed by "Pale Horse", "Pale Rider" (1939) and "The Leaning Tower" (1944). Her stories have been praised for their technical accomplishments in matters of style, form, and language. A collection of her essays and occasional pieces appeared as "The Days Before" (1952). Her first long novel "Ship of Fools" was published in 1962. The novel is a moral allegory that attempts to recreate the atmosphere of a world on the brink of disaster before the Second*

*World War. "All the conscious and recollected years of my life," wrote K.A. Porter in 1940, "have been lived to this day under the heavy threat of world catastrophe, and most of the energies of my mind and spirit have been spent in the effort to grasp the meaning of those threats, to trace them to their sources and to understand the logic of this majestic and terrible failure of the life of man in the Western world. The remaining forty years she witnessed of the century would do little to soften this vision. Porter's "Collected Stories" (1965) won both Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Her nonfiction includes a collection of essays "The Days Before" (1952), "The Collected Essays" (1970), and "The Never-Ending Wrong" (1977), a personal memoir of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial.*

## The Future is Now

NOT SOLONGAGO! was reading in a magazine with an enormous circulation some instructions as to how to behave if and when we see that flash brighter than the sun which means that the atom bomb has arrived. I read of course with the intense interest of one who has everything to learn on this subject; but at the end, the advice dwindled to this: the only real safety seems to lie in simply being somewhere else at the time, the farther away the better; the next best, failing access to deep shelters, bombproof cellars and all, is to get under a stout table — that is, just what you might do if someone were throwing bricks through your window and you were too nervous to throw them back.

This comic anticlimax to what I had been taking as a serious educational piece surprised me into real laughter, hearty and carefree. It is such a relief to be told the truth, or even just the facts, so pleasant not to be coddled with unreasonable hopes. That very evening I was drawn away from my work table to my fifth-story window by one of those shrill terror-screaming sirens which our excitement-loving city government used then to affect for so many occasions: A fire? Police chasing a gangster? Somebody being got to the hospital in a hurry? Some distinguished public guest being transferred from one point to another? Strange

aircraft coming over, maybe? Under the lights of the corner crossing of the great avenue, a huge closed vehicle whizzed past, screaming. I never knew what it was, had not in fact expected to know; no one I could possibly ask would know. Now that we have bells clamoring away instead for such events, we all have one doubt less, if perhaps one expectancy more. The single siren's voice means to tell us only one thing.

But at that doubtful moment, framed in a lighted window level with mine in the apartment house across the street, I saw a young man in a white T-shirt and white shorts at work polishing a long, beautiful dark table top. It was obviously his own table in his own flat, and he was enjoying his occupation. He was bent over in perfect concentration, rubbing, sandpapering, running the flat of his palm over the surface, standing back now and then to get the sheen of light on the fine wood. I am sure he had not even raised his head at the noise of the siren, much less had he come to the window. I stood there admiring his workmanlike devotion to a good job worth doing, and there flashed through me one of those pure fallacies of feeling which suddenly overleap reason: surely all that effort and energy so irreproachably employed were not going to be wasted on a table that was to be used merely for crawling under at some unspecified date. Then why take all those pains to make it beautiful? Any sort of old board would do.

I was so shocked at this treachery of the lurking Foul Fiend (despair is a foul fiend, and this was despair) I stood a moment longer, looking out and around, trying to collect my feelings, trying to think a little. Two windows away and a floor down in the house across the street, a young woman was lolling in a deep chair, reading and eating fruit from a little basket. On the sidewalk, a boy and a girl dressed alike in checker-board cotton shirts and skin-tight blue denims, a costume which displayed acutely the structural differences of their shapes, strolled along with their arms around each other. I believe this custom of lovers walking enwreathed in public was imported by our soldiers of the First World War from France, from Paris indeed. "You didn't see that sort of thing here before," certain members of the older generation were heard to remark quite often, in a tone of voice. Well, one sees quite a lot of it now, and it is a very pretty, reassuring sight. Other citizens of all sizes and kinds and ages were crossing

back and forth; lights flashed red and green, punctually. Motors zoomed by, and over the great city —but where am I going? I never read other peoples' descriptions of great cities, more particularly if it is a great city I know. It doesn't belong here anyway, except that I had again that quieting sense of the continuity of human experience on this earth, its perpetual aspirations, set-backs, failures and re-beginnings in eternal hope; and that, with some appreciable differences of dress, customs and means of conveyance, so people have lived and moved in the cities they have built for more millennia than we are yet able to account for, and will no doubt build and live for as many more.

Why did this console me? I cannot say; my mind is of the sort that can often be soothed with large generalities of that nature. The silence of the spaces between the stars does not affright me, as it did Pascal (1), because I am unable to imagine it except poetically; and my awe is not for the silence and space of the endless universe but for the inspired imagination of man, who can think and feel so, and turn a phrase like that to communicate it to us. Then too, I like the kind of honesty and directness of the young soldier who lately answered someone who asked him if he knew what he was fighting for. "I sure do," he said, "I am fighting to live." And as for the future, I was once reading the first writings of a young girl, an apprentice author, who was quite impatient to get on with the business and find her way into print. There is very little one can say of use in such matters, but I advised her against haste — she could so easily regret it. "Give yourself time," I said, "the future will take care of itself." This opinionated young person looked down her little nose at me and said, "The future is now." She may have heard the phrase somewhere and liked it, or she may just have naturally belonged to that school of metaphysics; I am sure she was too young to have investigated the thought deeply. But maybe she was right and the future does arrive every day and it is all we have, from one second to the next.

So I glanced again at the young man at work, a proper-looking candidate for the armed services, and realized the plain, homely fact: he was not preparing a possible shelter, something to cower under trembling; he was restoring a beautiful surface to put his books and papers on, to serve his plates from, to hold his cocktail tray and his lamp. He was full of the deep, right, instinctive, human belief that he and the table were going

to be around together for a long time. Even if he is off to the army next week, it will be there when he gets back. At the very least, he is doing something he feels is worth doing now, and that is no small thing.

At once the difficulty, and the hope, of our special time in this world of Western Europe and America is that we have been brought up for many generations in the belief, however tacit, that all humanity was almost unanimously engaged in going forward, naturally to better things and to higher reaches. Since the eighteenth century at least when the Encyclopedists seized upon the Platonic (1) theory that the highest pleasure of mankind was pursuit of the good, the true, and the beautiful, progress, in precisely the sense of perpetual, gradual amelioration of the hard human lot, has been taught popularly not just as theory of possibility but as an article of faith and the groundwork of a whole political doctrine. Mr. Toynbee has even simplified this view for us with picture diagrams of various sections of humanity, each in its own cycle rising to its own height, struggling beautifully on from craggy level to level, but always upward. Whole peoples are arrested at certain points, and perish there, but others go on. There is also the school of thought, Oriental and very ancient, which gives to life the spiral shape, and the spiral moves by nature upward. Even adherents of the circular or recurring-cycle school, also ancient and honorable, somehow do finally allow that the circle is a thread that spins itself out one layer above another, so that even though it is perpetually at every moment passing over a place it has been before, yet by its own width it will have risen just so much higher.

These are admirable attempts to get a little meaning and order into our view of our destiny, in that same spirit which moves the artist to labor with his little handful of chaos, bringing it to coherency within a frame; but on the visible evidence we must admit that in human nature the spirit of contradiction more than holds its own. Mankind has always built a little more than he has hitherto been able or willing to destroy; got more children than he has been able to kill; invented more laws and customs than he had any intention of observing; founded more religions than he was able to practice or even to believe in; made in general many more promises than he

could keep; and has been known more than once to commit suicide through mere fear of death. Now in our time, in his pride to explore his universe to its unimaginable limits and to exceed his possible powers, he has at last produced an embarrassing series of engines too powerful for their containers and too tricky for their mechanicians; millions of labor-saving gadgets which can be rendered totally useless by the mere failure of the public power plants, and has reduced himself to such helplessness that a dozen or less of the enemy could disable a whole city by throwing a few switches. This paradoxical creature has committed all these extravagances and created all these dangers and sufferings in a quest — we are told — for peace and security.

How much of this are we to believe, when with the pride of Lucifer (2), the recklessness of Icarus (3), the boldness of Prometheus (4) and the intellectual curiosity of Adam and Eve (yes, intellectual; the serpent promised them wisdom if . . .) man has obviously outreached himself, to the point where he cannot understand his own science or control his own inventions. Indeed he has become as the gods, who have over and over again suffered defeat and downfall at the hands of their creatures. Having devised the most exquisite and instantaneous means of communication to all corners of the earth, for years upon years friends were unable even to get a postcard message to each other across national frontiers. The newspapers assure us that from the kitchen tap there flows a chemical, cheap and available, to make a bomb more disturbing to the imagination even than the one we so appallingly have; yet no machine has been invented to purify that water so that it will not spoil even the best tea or coffee. Or at any rate, it is not in use. We are the proud possessors of rocket bombs that go higher and farther and faster than any ever before, and there is some talk of a rocket ship shortly to take off for the moon. (My plan is to stow away.) We may indeed reach the moon some day, and I dare predict that will happen before we have devised a decent system of city garbage disposal.

This lunatic atom bomb has succeeded in rousing the people of all nations to the highest point of unanimous moral dudgeon; great numbers of persons are

frightened who never really had much cause to be frightened before. This world has always been a desperately dangerous place to live for the greater part of the earth's inhabitants; it was, however reluctantly, endured as the natural state of affairs. Yet the invention of every new weapon of war has always been greeted with horror and righteous indignation, especially by those who failed to invent it, or who were threatened with it first . . . bows and arrows, stone cannon balls, gunpowder, flintlocks, pistols, the dumdum bullet, the Maxim silencer, the machine gun, poison gas, armored tanks, and on and on to the grand climax — if it should prove to be — of the experiment on Hiroshima (5). Nagasaki (6) was bombed too, remember? Or were we already growing accustomed to the idea? And as for Hiroshima, surely it could not have been the notion of sudden death of others that shocked us? How could it be, when in two great wars within one generation we have become familiar with millions of shocking deaths, by sudden violence of most cruel devices, and by agonies prolonged for years in prisons and hospitals and concentration camps. We take with apparent calmness the news of the deaths of millions by flood, famine, plague — no, all the frontiers of danger are down now, no one is safe, no one, and that, alas, really means all of us. It is our own deaths we fear, and so let's out with it and give up our fine debauch of moralistic frenzy over Hiroshima.

- Fall, 1952. The hydrogen bomb has just been exploded, very successfully, to the satisfaction of the criminals who caused it to be made.

## Commentary

**(1)Pascal** – (1623 – 1662) французский религиозный философ, писатель, математик и физик **(2) Platon** – (428 или 427 – 348 или 347 до н. эры) древне-греческий философ идеалист, ученик Сократа **(3) Lucifer** – в

христианской мифологии падший ангел, дьявол **(4)Icarus** – в греческой мифологии сын Дедала, поднявшийся в небо вместе с отцом **(5) Prometheus** – и греческой мифологии титан, похитивший у богов огонь и передавший его людям **(6)Hiroshima** – город в Японии, на юго-западе острова Хонсю. 6 августа 1945 года США сбросили на город первую атомную бомбу. Значительная часть города была разрушена, убито и ранено свыше 140 тыс. человек **(7)Nagasaki –** город и порт в Японии на острове Кюсю. 8 августа 1945 года на Нагасаки была сброшена американская атомная бомба, разрушившая треть города, было убито и ранено около 75 тыс. жителей

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

adherent (n), amelioration (n), conveyance (n), craggy (a), demise (n), dudgeon (n), dwindle (v), famine (n), flintlock (n), gadget (n), instantaneous (a), millennia (n), plague (n), quest (n), sheen (n), siren (n), stow (v), tacit (a), treachery (n), whiz (n)

to be coddled with something, to walk enwreathed

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. This comic anticlimax to what I had been taking as a serious educational piece surprised me into real laughter, hearty and carefree. It is such a relief to be told the truth, or even just the facts, so pleasant not to be coddled with unreasonable hopes.

2. I was so shocked at this treachery of the lurking Foul Fiend (despair is a foul fiend, and this was despair) I stood a moment longer, looking out and around, trying to collect my feelings, trying to think a little.

3. … my mind is of the sort that can often be soothed with large generalities of that nature. The silence of the spaces between the stars does not affright me, as it did Pascal, because I am unable to imagine it except poetically; …

4. "Give yourself time," I said, "the future will take care of itself." This opinionated young person looked down her little nose at me and said, "The future is now."

5. He was full of the deep, right, instinctive, human belief that he and the table were going to be around together for a long time.

6. At once the difficulty, and the hope, of our special time in this world of Western Europe and America is that we have been brought up for many generations in the belief, however tacit, that all humanity was almost unanimously engaged in going forward, naturally to better things and to higher reaches.

7. There is also the school of thought, Oriental and very ancient, which gives to life the spiral shape, and the spiral moves by nature upward.

8. Since the eighteenth century at least when the Encyclopedists seized upon the Platonic theory that the highest pleasure of mankind was pursuit of the good, the true, and the beautiful, progress, in precisely the sense of perpetual, gradual amelioration of the hard human lot, has been taught popularly not just as theory of possibility but as an article of faith and the groundwork of a whole political doctrine.

9. Mankind has always built a little more than he has hitherto been able or willing to destroy; got more children than he has been able to kill; invented more laws and customs than he had any intention of observing; …

10. This paradoxical creature has committed all these extravagances and created all these dangers and sufferings in a quest — we are told — for peace and security.

10. We may indeed reach the moon some day, and I dare predict that will happen before we have devised a decent system of city garbage disposal.

12. This lunatic atom bomb has succeeded in rousing the people of all nations to the highest point of unanimous moral dudgeon; great numbers of persons are frightened who never really had much cause to be frightened before.

13. We take with apparent calmness the news of the deaths of millions by flood, famine, plague — no, all the frontiers of danger are down now, no one is safe, no one, and that, alas, really means all of us.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

**1.** That very evening I was drawn away from my work table to my fifth-story window by one of those shrill terror-screaming sirens which our excitement-loving city government used then to affect for so many occasions: A fire? Police chasing a gangster?

**2.** Under the lights of the corner crossing of the great avenue, a huge closed vehicle whizzed past, screaming. I never knew what it was, had not in fact expected to know; no one I could possibly ask would know.

3. It was obviously his own table in his own flat, and he was enjoying his occupation. He was bent over in perfect concentration, rubbing, sandpapering, running the flat of his palm over the surface, standing back now and then to get the sheen of light on the fine wood. I am sure he had not even raised his head at the noise of the siren, much less had he come to the window.

4. And as for the future, I was once reading the first writings of a young girl, an apprentice author, who was quite impatient to get on with the business and find her way into print.

5. So I glanced again at the young man at work, a proper-looking candidate for the armed services, and realized the plain, homely fact: he was not preparing a possible shelter, something to cower under trembling; he was restoring a beautiful surface to put his books and papers on, to serve his plates from, to hold his cocktail tray and his lamp.

6. These are admirable attempts to get a little meaning and order into our view of our destiny, in that same spirit which moves the artist to labor with his little handful of chaos, bringing it to coherency within a frame; but on the visible evidence we must admit that in human nature the spirit of contradiction more than holds its own.

### 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. What did K. Porter feel while reading some instructions as to how to behave when you see that the atom bomb has arrived? What impression did the comic anticlimax at the end of these instructions produce on the author?
3. What scenes did K. Porter see through her fifth-story window? What impression did they produce on her?
4. Comment on the episode with the young soldier who was asked if he knew what he was fighting for?
5. Comment on the episode with the young girl, an apprentice author.
6. What attempts were made to get meaning and order into the view of destiny? (Platonic theory, the views of ancient Oriental school of thought)
7. Comment on the development of science and technology. What point did it reach? Is there any paradox in the way of development of science and technology?
8. What does K. Porter think about the safety of mankind at the moment?
9. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
10. Comment on the author's individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

## Vladimir Nabokov (1899 – 1977)

***Biographical Notes.*** *Vladimir Nabokov was born in St. Petersburg into a wealthy, aristocratic family. His father, Vladimir Dimitrievich Nabokov, was a liberal politician, lawyer, and journalist. The household was Anglophile - Nabokov spoke Russian and English, and at the age of five he learned French. Nabokov received his education at the Tenishev, St. Petersburg's most innovative school. At 16 he inherited a large estate from his father's brother, but he did not have much time to enjoy his wealth. During the Russian Revolution his father was briefly arrested. Nabokov emigrated to England and entered Trinity College, Cambridge, from where he graduated in 1923. "I am", claimed V. Nabokov in a 1963*

*interview, "an American writer, born in Russia and educated in England, where I studied French literature, before spending fifteen years in Germany." Nabokov achieved a full career as a Russian novelist and poet among the large community of his fellow exiles in Western Europe. In the United States he began a new career as a writer in English, a language that, like French he had known since childhood. While in Paris, he wrote his first novel in English, "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight" (1941). After he had taught for some years in Wellesley and Cornell, the success of his most famous novel, "Lolita" (1955), allowed him to settle in Switzerland and devote all his time to writing. From 1959 Nabokov lived in Switzerland, where his permanent home was at the Montreux Palace Hotel. He continued to collect butterflies, which after his death were stored at the Cantonal Museum of Zoology of Lausanne. Nabokov's later works include " ADA" (1969), a love story set on the planet of Antiterra, a mixture of Russia and America, "TRANSPARENT THINGS" (1972), and "LOOK AT THE HARLEQUINS" (1975), in which Nabokov' s own life coincides occasionally with the protagonist's, also a writer. Among Nabokov's major critical works are his study of Nikolay Gogol (1944), and translation of Aleksandr Pushkin's masterpiece "Eugene Onegin" (1964), with commentary. In the 1940s Nabokov began publishing in magazines separate autobiographical essays: "Conclusive Evidence" (1951) and "Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited (1966). Nabokov hoped to cover his American years in a sequel to be called "speak On, Memory", but never did. Nabokov died in Lausanne on July 2, 1977.*

## Perfect Past

1

THE CRADLE ROCKS above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness. Although

the two are identical twins, man, as a rule, views the prenatal abyss with more calm than the one he is heading for (at some forty-five hundred heartbeats an hour). I know, however, of a young chronophobiac who experienced something like panic when looking for the first time at homemade movies that had been taken a few weeks before his birth. He saw a world that was practically unchanged — the same house, the same people — and then realized that he did not exist there at all and that nobody mourned his absence. He caught a glimpse of his mother waving from an upstairs window, and that unfamiliar gesture disturbed him, as if it were some mysterious farewell. But what particularly frightened him was the sight of a brand-new baby carriage standing there on the porch, with the smug, encroaching air of a coffin; even that was empty, as if, in the reverse course of events, his very bones had disintegrated.

Such fancies are not foreign to young lives. Or, to put it otherwise, first and last things often tend to have an adolescent note — unless, possibly, they are directed by some venerable and rigid religion. Nature expects a full-grown man to accept the two black voids, fore and aft, as stolidly as he accepts the extraordinary visions in between. Imagination, the supreme delight of the immortal and the immature, should be limited. In order to enjoy life, we should not enjoy it too much.

I rebel against this state of affairs. I feel the urge to take my rebellion outside and picket nature. Over and over again, my mind has made colossal efforts to distinguish the faintest of personal glimmers in the impersonal darkness on both sides of my life. That this darkness is caused merely by the walls of time separating me and my bruised fists from the free world of timelessness is a belief I gladly share with the most gaudily painted savage. I have journeyed back in thought — with thought hopelessly tapering off as I went — to remote regions where I groped for some secret outlet only to discover that the prison of time is spherical and without exits. Short of suicide, I have tried everything. I have doffed my identity in order to pass for a conventional spook

and steal into realms that existed before I was conceived. I have mentally endured the degrading company of Victorian lady novelists and retired colonels who remembered having, in former lives, been slave messengers on a Roman road or sages under the willows of Lhasa. I have ransacked my oldest dreams for keys and clues — and let me say at once that I reject completely the vulgar, shabby, fundamentally medieval world of Freud (1), with its crankish quest for sexual symbols (something like searching for Baconian acrostics in Shakespeare's works) and its bitter little embryos spying, from their natural nooks, upon the love life of their parents.

Initially, I was unaware that time, so boundless at first blush, was a prison. In probing my childhood (which is the next best to probing one's eternity) I see the awakening of consciousness as a series of spaced flashes, with the intervals between them gradually diminishing until bright blocks of perception are formed, affording memory a slippery hold. I had learned numbers and speech more or less simultaneously at a very early date, but the inner knowledge that I was I and that my parents were my parents seems to have been established only later, when it was directly associated with my discovering their age in relation to mine. Judging by the strong sunlight that, when I think of that revelation, immediately invades my memory with lobed sun flecks through overlapping patterns of greenery, the occasion may have been my mother's birthday, in late summer, in the country, and I had asked questions and had assessed the answers I received. All this is as it should be according to the theory of recapitulation; the beginning of reflexive consciousness in the brain of our remotest ancestor must surely have coincided with the dawning of the sense of time.

Thus, when the newly disclosed, fresh and trim formula of my own age, four, was confronted with the parental formulas, thirty-three and twenty-seven, something happened to me. I was given a tremendously invigorating shock. As if subjected to a second baptism, on more divine lines than the Greek Catholic

ducking undergone fifty months earlier by a howling, half-drowned half-Victor (my mother, through the half-closed door, behind which an old custom bade parents retreat, managed to correct the bungling archpresbyter, Father Konstantin Vetvenitski), I felt myself plunged abruptly into a radiant and mobile medium that was none other than the pure element of time. One shared it —just as excited bathers share shining seawater — with creatures that were not oneself but that were joined to one by time's common flow, an environment quite different from the spatial world, which not only man but apes and butterflies can perceive. At that instant, I became acutely aware that the twenty-seven-year-old being, in soft white and pink, holding my left hand, was my mother, and that the thirty-three-year-old being, in hard white and gold, holding my right hand, was my father. Between them, as they evenly progressed, I strutted, and trotted, and strutted again, from sun fleck to sun fleck, along the middle of a path, which I easily identify today with an alley of ornamental oaklings in the park of our country estate, Vyra, in the former Province of St. Petersburg, Russia. Indeed, from my present ridge of remote, isolated, almost uninhabited time, I see my diminutive self as celebrating, on that August day 1903, the birth of sentient life. If my left-hand-holder and my right-hand-holder had both been present before in my vague infant world, they had been so under the mask of a tender incognito; but now my father's attire, the resplendent uniform of the Horse Guards (2), with that smooth golden swell of cuirass burning upon his chest and back, came out like the sun, and for several years afterward I remained keenly interested in the age of my parents and kept myself informed about it, like a nervous passenger asking the time in order to check a new watch.

My father, let it be noted, had served his term of military training long before I was born, so I suppose he had that day put on the trappings of his old regiment as a festive joke. To a joke, then, I owe my first gleam of complete consciousness — which again has recapitulatory implications, since the first creatures on earth to become aware of time were also the first creatures to smile.

2

It was the primordial cave (and not what Freudian mystics might suppose) that lay behind the games I played when I was four. A big cretonne-covered divan, white with black trefoils, in one of the drawing rooms at Vyra rises in my mind, like some massive product of a geological upheaval before the beginning of history. History begins (with the promise of fair Greece) not far from one end of this divan, where a large potted hydrangea shrub, with pale blue blossoms and some greenish ones, half conceals, in a corner of the room, the pedestal of a marble bust of Diana. On the wall against which the divan stands, another phase of history is marked by a gray engraving in an ebony frame — one of those Napoleonic-battle pictures in which the episodic and the allegoric are the real adversaries and where one sees, all grouped together on the same plane of vision, a wounded drummer, a dead horse, trophies, one soldier about to bayonet another, and the invulnerable emperor posing with his generals amid the frozen fray.

With the help of some grown-up person, who would use first both hands and then a powerful leg, the divan would be moved several inches away from the wall, so as to form a narrow passage which I would be further helped to roof snugly with the divan's bolsters and close up at the ends with a couple of its cushions. I then had the fantastic pleasure of creeping through that pitch-dark tunnel, where I lingered a little to listen to the singing in my ears — that lonesome vibration so familiar to small boys in dusty hiding places — and then, in a burst of delicious panic, on rapidly thudding hands and knees I would reach the tunnel's far end, push its cushion away, and be welcomed by a mesh of sunshine on the parquet under the canework of a Viennese chair and two gamesome flies settling by turns. A dreamier and more delicate sensation was provided by another cave game, when upon awakening in the early morning I made a tent of my bedclothes and let my imagination play in a thousand dim ways with shadowy snowslides of linen and with the faint light that

seemed to penetrate my penum-bral covert from some immense distance, where I fancied that strange, pale animals roamed in a landscape of lakes. The recollection of my crib, with its lateral nets of fluffy cotton cords, brings back, too, the pleasure of handling a certain beautiful, delightfully solid, garnet-dark crystal egg left over from some unremembered Easter; I used to chew a corner of the bedsheet until it was thoroughly soaked and then wrap the egg in it tightly, so as to admire and re-lick the warm, ruddy glitter of the snugly enveloped facets that came seeping through with a miraculous completeness of glow and color. But that was not yet the closest I got to feeding upon beauty.

How small the cosmos (a kangaroo's pouch would hold it), how paltry and puny in comparison to human consciousness, to a single individual recollection, and its expression in words! I may be inordinately fond of my earliest impressions, but then I have reason to be grateful to them. They led the way to a veritable Eden of visual and tactile sensations. One night, during a trip abroad, in the fall of 1903,1 recall kneeling on my (flattish) pillow at the window of a sleeping car (probably on the long-extinct Mediterranean Train de Luxe, the one whose six cars had the lower part of their body painted in umber and the panels in cream) and seeing with an inexplicable pang, a handful of fabulous lights that beckoned to me from a distant hillside, and then slipped into a pocket of black velvet: diamonds that I later gave away to my characters to alleviate the burden of my wealth. I had probably managed to undo and push up the tight tooled blind at the head of my berth, and my heels were cold, but I still kept kneeling and peering. Nothing is sweeter or stranger than to ponder those first thrills. They belong to the harmonious world of a perfect childhood and, as such, possess a naturally plastic form in one's memory, which can be set down with hardly any effort; it is only starting with the recollections of one's adolescence that Mnemosyne begins to get choosy and crabbed. I would moreover submit that, in regard to the power of hoarding up impressions, Russian children of my generation passed through a period of genius, as if destiny were loyally trying

what it could for them by giving them more than their share, in view of the cataclysm that was to remove completely the world they had known. Genius disappeared when everything had been stored, just as it does with those other, more specialized child prodigies — pretty, curly-headed youngsters waving batons or taming enormous pianos, who eventually turn into second-rate musicians with sad eyes and obscure ailments and something vaguely misshapen about their eunuchoid hindquarters. But even so, the individual mystery remains to tantalize the memoirist. Neither in environment nor in heredity can I find the exact instrument that fashioned me, the anonymous roller that pressed upon my life a certain intricate watermark whose unique design becomes visible when the lamp of art is made to shine through life's foolscap.

3

To fix correctly, in terms of time, some of my childhood recollections, I have to go by comets and eclipses, as historians do when they tackle the fragments of a saga. But in other cases there is no dearth of data. I see myself, for instance, clambering over wet black rocks at the seaside while Miss Norcott, a languid and melancholy governess, who thinks I am following her, strolls away along the curved beach with Sergey, my younger brother. I am wearing a toy bracelet. As I crawl over those rocks, I keep repeating, in a kind of zestful, copious, and deeply gratifying incantation, the English word "childhood," which sounds mysterious and new, and becomes stranger and stranger as it gets mixed up in my small, overstocked, hectic mind, with Robin Hood and Little Red Riding Hood, and the brown hoods of old hunchbacked fairies. There are dimples in the rocks, full of tepid seawater, and my magic muttering accompanies certain spells I am weaving over the tiny sapphire pools.

The place is of course Abbazia, on the Adriatic. The thing around my wrist, looking like a fancy napkin ring, made of semitranslucent, pale-green and

pink, celluloidish stuff, is the fruit of a Christmas tree, which Onya, a pretty cousin, my coeval, gave me in St. Petersburg a few months before. I sentimentally treasured it until it developed dark streaks inside which I decided as in a dream were my hair cuttings which somehow had got into the shiny substance together with my tears during a dreadful visit to a hated hairdresser in nearby Fiume. On the same day, at a waterside cafe, my father happened to notice, just as we were being served, two Japanese officers at a table near us, and we immediately left — not without my hastily snatching, a whole *bombe* of lemon sherbet, which I carried away secreted in my aching mouth. The year was 1904.1 was five. Russia was fighting Japan. With hearty relish, the English illustrated weekly Miss Norcott subscribed to reproduced war pictures by Japanese artists that showed how the Russian locomotives — made singularly toylike by the Japanese pictorial style — would drown if our Army tried to lay rails across the treacherous ice of Lake Baikal.

But let me see. I had an even earlier association with that war. One afternoon at the beginning of the same year, in our St. Petersburg house, I was led down from the nursery into my father's study to say how-do-you-do to a friend of the family, General Kuropatkin. His thickset, uniform-encased body creaking slightly, he spread out to amuse me a handful of matches, on the divan where he was sitting, placed ten of them end to end to make a horizontal line, and said, "This is the sea in calm weather." Then he tipped up each pair so as to turn the straight line into a zigzag — and that was "a stormy sea." He scrambled the matches and was about to do, I hoped, a better trick when we were interrupted. His aide-de-camp was shown in and said something to him. With a Russian, flustered grunt, Kuropatkin heavily rose from his seat, the loose matches jumping up on the divan as his weight left it. That day, he had been ordered to assume supreme command of the Russian Army in the Far East.

This incident had a special sequel fifteen years later, when at a certain point of my father's flight from Bolshevik-held St. Petersburg to southern Russia he was

accosted while crossing a bridge, by an old man who looked like a gray-bearded peasant in his sheepskin coat. He asked my father for a light. The next moment each recognized the other. I hope old Kuropatkin, in his rustic disguise, managed to evade Soviet imprisonment, but that is not the point. What pleases me is the evolution of the match theme: those magic ones he had shown me had been trifled with and mislaid, and his armies had also vanished, and everything had fallen through, like my toy trains that, in the winter of 1904-05, in Wiesbaden, I tried to run over the frozen puddles in the grounds of the Hotel Oranien. The following of such thematic designs through one's life should be, I think, the true purpose of autobiography. <…>

5

The old and the new, the liberal touch and the patriarchal one, fatal poverty and fatalistic wealth got fantastically interwoven in that strange first decade of our century. Several times during a summer it might happen that in the middle of luncheon, in the bright, many-windowed, walnut-paneled dining room on the first floor of our Vyra manor, Aleksey, the butler, with an unhappy expression on his face, would bend over and inform my father in a low voice (especially low if we had company) that a group of villagers wanted to see the *barin* outside. Briskly my father would remove his napkin from his lap and ask my mother to excuse him. One of the windows at the west end of the dining room gave upon a portion of the drive near the main entrance. One could see the top of the honeysuckle bushes opposite the porch. From that direction the courteous buzz of a peasant welcome would reach us as the invisible group greeted my invisible father. The ensuing parley, conducted in ordinary tones, would not be heard, as the windows underneath which it took place were closed to keep out the heat. It presumably had to do with a plea for his mediation in some local feud, or with some special subsidy, or with the permission to harvest some bit of our land or cut down a coveted clump of our trees. If, as usually happened, the request was at once granted, there would be again that buzz, and then in token of gratitude, the

good *barin* would be put through the national ordeal of being rocked and tossed up and securely caught by a score or so of strong arms.

In the dining room, my brother and I would be told to go on with our food. My mother, a tidbit between finger and thumb, would glance under the table to see if her nervous and gruff was there. *"Un jour Us vont le laisser tomber"*(3) would come from Mile Golay, a primly pessimistic old lady who had been my mother's governess and still dwelt with us (on awful terms with our own governesses). From my place at table I would suddenly see through one of the west windows a marvelous case of levitation. There, for an instant, the figure of my father in his wind-rippled white summer suit would be displayed, gloriously sprawling in midair, his limbs in a curiously casual attitude, his handsome, imperturbable features turned to the sky. Thrice, to the mighty heave-ho of his invisible tossers, he would fly up in this fashion, and the second time he would go higher than the first and then there he would be, on his last and loftiest flight, reclining, as if for good, against the cobalt blue of the summer noon, like one of those paradisiac personages who comfortably soar, with such a wealth of folds in their garments, on the vaulted ceiling of a church while below, one by one, the wax tapers in mortal hands light up to make a swarm of minute flames in the mist of incense, and the priest chants of eternal repose, and funeral lilies conceal the face of whoever lies there, among the swimming lights, in the open coffin.

## Commentary

**(1) Freud –** Фрейд Зигмунд (1856-1939), австрийский врач-психиатр и психолог, основатель психоанализа. **(2) uniform of the Horse Guards** – кавалергардская униформа. ***(3) “Un jour Us vont le laisser tomber”*** – “Когда-нибудь они его уронят” (франц.).

## 1. Words and word combinations to be memorized

abyss (n), adolescent (a), attire (n), bruised (a), coeval(n), cuirass (n), doff (v), dachshund (n), embryos (a), fleck (n), gaudily (adv), glimmer (n), glimpse (n), gruff (a), lob (v), mesh (n), porch (n), prenatal (a), puny (a), smug (a), spatial (a), spook (n), upheaval (a), void (n)

## 2. Explain and expand on the following

1. THE CRADLE ROCKS above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness. Although the two are identical twins, man, as a rule, views the prenatal abyss with more calm than the one he is heading for (at some forty-five hundred heartbeats an hour).

**2.** Nature expects a full-grown man to accept the two black voids, fore and aft, as stolidly as he accepts the extraordinary visions in between. Imagination, the supreme delight of the immortal and the immature, should be limited. In order to enjoy life, we should not enjoy it too much.

**3.** Over and over again, my mind has made colossal efforts to distinguish the faintest of personal glimmers in the impersonal darkness on both sides of my life.

4. Initially, I was unaware that time, so boundless at first blush, was a prison.

5. It was the primordial cave (and not what Freudian mystics might suppose) that lay behind the games I played when I was four.

6. How small the cosmos (a kangaroo's pouch would hold it), how paltry and puny in comparison to human consciousness, to a single individual recollection, and its expression in words!

**7.** To fix correctly, in terms of time, some of my childhood recollections, I have to go by comets and eclipses, as historians do when they tackle the fragments of a saga. But in other cases there is no dearth of data.

8. The old and the new, the liberal touch and the patriarchal one, fatal poverty and fatalistic wealth got fantastically interwoven in that strange first decade of our century.

### 3. Paraphrase the following sentences from the text

1. He saw a world that was practically unchanged — the same house, the same people — and then realized that he did not exist there at all and that nobody mourned his absence. He caught a glimpse of his mother waving from an upstairs window, and that unfamiliar gesture disturbed him, as if it were some mysterious farewell.

**2.** Short of suicide, I have tried everything. I have doffed my identity in order to pass for a conventional spook and steal into realms that existed before I was conceived.

3. In probing my childhood (which is the next best to probing one's eternity) I see the awakening of consciousness as a series of spaced flashes, with the intervals between them gradually diminishing until bright blocks of perception are formed, affording memory a slippery hold.

4. Thus, when the newly disclosed, fresh and trim formula of my own age, four, was confronted with the parental formulas, thirty-three and twenty-seven, something happened to me. I was given a tremendously invigorating shock.

5. I would moreover submit that, in regard to the power of hoarding up impressions, Russian children of my generation passed through a period of genius, as if destiny were loyally trying what it could for them by giving them more than

their share, in view of the cataclysm that was to remove completely the world they had known.

6. There, for an instant, the figure of my father in his wind-rippled white summer suit would be displayed, gloriously sprawling in midair, his limbs in a curiously casual attitude, his handsome, imperturbable features turned to the sky.

## 4. Questions of method and strategy

1. Characterize the essay under study: classify it and give its essence.
2. Why do people view the prenatal abyss with more calm than the one they are heading for (at some forty-five hundred heartbeats an hour)?
3. What feelings did a young chronofobiac experience watching a homemade movie made a few weeks before his birth? What fancies are not foreign to young lives?
4. What must people do to enjoy life?
5. Does the author agree with this state of affairs? What efforts did he make to distinguish personal glimmers in the darkness on both sides of his life?
6. What are the author's first memories of the past? Is he attached to them?
7. What games did the author play in his early childhood? How does he describe them? Are these memories dear to him?
8. Comment on the scene described at the end of the essay. What associations does this scene bring to the author's mind?
9. Analyze the composition of the essay and comment on the use of lexical, syntactical and phonetic stylistic devices.
10. Comment on the author's individual style. Present the final text interpretation.

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