

Tradition and the Individual Talent

by *T. S. Eliot*

- 1 In English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to “the tradition” or to “a tradition”; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-so is “traditional” or even “too traditional.” Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archaeological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archaeology.
- 2 Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are “more critical” than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet’s difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.
- 3 Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, “tradition” should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to any one who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.

Released Test Questions

English–Language Arts

11

- 4 No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not onesided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

[Public Domain]

CSR1P195

54 The passage argues that a truly traditional writer is one who

- A has a sense of connectedness to the great works of the past.
- B refuses to change his style just to impress literary critics.
- C mimics techniques used by successful writers in the past.
- D can adequately describe the place and time in which he lives.

CSR11502.195

55 Read the sentence from the passage.

One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else.

The author mentions this tendency in order to

- A acknowledge this method as the best method of criticism.
- B defend his own writing against possible criticism.
- C show that he identifies with the reader.
- D challenge the idea that mere novelty makes a writer great.

CSR11507.195

56 Which of the following would have *most* effectively helped the author express his concept of tradition?

- A anticipating and addressing possible counterpoints to his argument
- B closely relating tradition to historical perception
- C comparing works that he does and does not consider traditional
- D expounding upon the idea of archaeological reconstruction

CSR11509.195

The following questions are not about a passage. Read and answer each question.

57 When the leaders of the two parties in the Senate agree on an amendment, the support is called

- A bipolar.
- B bipartisan.
- C bilingual.
- D biannual.

CSR0066.OSA

Released Test Questions

English–Language Arts

11

58 The relationship between whisper and scream is the same as the relationship between

- A thunder and lightning.
- B breeze and tornado.
- C light and dark.
- D sweet and candy.

CSR00072.OSA

59 Which word is the correct term for a life form that can live both on land and in water?

- A antibiotic
- B amphibious
- C biodegradable
- D biogenesis

CSR00161.OSA

60 Which term refers to the study of diseases of the brain?

- A neurobiology
- B epidemiology
- C dermapathology
- D neuropathology

CSR00067.OSA

61 The relationship between *fire* and *ashes* is the same as the relationship between *event* and

- A *episode*.
- B *imagination*.
- C *newspaper*.
- D *memories*.

CSR00065.OSA

62 Which version of this sentence does *not* contain any misspelled words?

- A Smythvale once contaned many successful businesses.
- B Smythvale once contained many sucessful businesses.
- C Smythvale once contained many successful businesses.
- D Smythvale once contaned many sucessful businesses.

CSL11910.OSA

63 Which instrument would be used by a scientist to measure time?

- A goniometer
- B hydrometer
- C chronometer
- D anemometer

CSR00104.OSA

64 The relationship between *child* and *adult* is the same as the relationship between *sapling* and

- A *youth*.
- B *parent*.
- C *tree*.
- D *seed*.

CSR00276.OSA

65 A person who frequents the hallways of the legislature in order to influence public officials is called a

- A congressman.
- B liaison.
- C lobbyist.
- D petitioner.

CSR00062.OSA

The following is a rough draft of a student’s report, which may contain errors.

Was Early Medicine Just What the Doctor Ordered?

(1) The medical profession has come a long way, but it had to start somewhere. (2) Early medicine was often based on inadequate or unscientific information. (3) Early physicians sometimes did the right thing even if they did not do it in precisely the correct way. (4) For example, the ancient Egyptians used thousands of herbs for their incredible healing power. (5) There is also evidence that they set and splinted fractured bones. (6) They even attempted surgery, but due to a lack of anesthesia, the patient usually had another problem, a bump on the head after being knocked unconscious. (7) However, ancient medical practice involved not only direct treatment but also philosophical ideas. (8) The Greek physician Hippocrates, known as the “father of medicine,” created a code of ethical medical behavior that is still used by doctors today.

(9) Renaissance physicians began to search for more scientific evidence to support their medical findings. (10) This search did not stop all old practices. (11) For instance, some of the first barbers also were surgeons. (12) They performed minor surgeries along with hair cuts and attention to small wounds; however, they were not as respected as physicians. (13) While some of these methods may seem like common sense and others demonstrate a lack of sense, the work of these early physicians pushed people to question and learn, essential skills in the world of medicine.

CSL1P050

- 66** Which sentence should be added as the first sentence in the second paragraph to introduce the ideas in the paragraph?
- A This code of behavior is today known as the Hippocratic Oath.
 - B The growing interest in science that characterized the Renaissance in the 1400s brought changes in medicine.
 - C Interestingly, barbers have often been linked to medical practice.
 - D Common sense is a rare commodity, but it has been important in medicine.

CSL11828.050

- 67** Which sentence in the passage *best* supports the idea in sentence 3?
- A sentence 5
 - B sentence 6
 - C sentence 10
 - D sentence 11

CSL10363.050

- 68** Which verb phrase would make the action of the underlined word in sentence 11 more precise?
- A were named
 - B were being
 - C were specified as
 - D were considered to be

CSL10360.050

The following is a rough draft of a student’s report, which may contain errors.

Pioneer in Prevention

(1) Sara Josephine Baker was born in Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1873 and attended private schools in preparation for Vassar College. (2) She supposed that she would finish college, get married, and raise a family. (3) Circumstances caused a change in plans. (4) Instead of attending Vassar, her family decided that Baker would obtain a degree that would allow her to earn a living for the family. (5) Most likely, her relatives expected her to choose one of the occupations considered suitable for a young woman at the time. (6) Nursing is a popular profession today. (7) Baker astonished them all by choosing to attend the Women’s Medical College of the New York Infirmity for Women and Children. (8) Despite her family’s objections, she moved to New York City in 1894 to begin her training.

(9) After graduation, she worked as an intern at the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston. (10) During a three-month assignment in an outpatient clinic, Baker encountered a world very different from her own and learned that medical science was not adequately reaching these crowded city populations. (11) Consequently, she devoted her life to the children of these cities, first as a medical inspector for the New York City Department of Health and eventually as assistant to the commissioner of health. (12) Her success in these positions allowed her to gain funding for one of her most important achievements, a comprehensive approach to preventive health care for children. (13) In a time when most medical attention was given after a person was already sick, she tested her approach with remarkable results. (14) While her name may not be famous, her contributions to infant and child care, including the creation of safe baby clothes, continues to save lives each day.

CSL1P054

69 Which transition would *best* enhance the meaning if added as the second word in sentence 3?

- A , doubtfully,
- B , amazingly,
- C , however,
- D , moreover,

CSL10407.054

70 Which sentence is *not* related to the main idea of the essay?

- A sentence 2
- B sentence 6
- C sentence 11
- D sentence 12

CSL10403.054

Released Test Questions

English–Language Arts

11

71 Read the following sentence.

After her retirement from the Bureau of Child Hygiene, she was a representative on children’s health issues to the League of Nations.

Where is the *best* place to add the sentence to the report?

- A after sentence 1
- B after sentence 4
- C after sentence 9
- D after sentence 13

CSL10408.054

72 Which of these is the correct substitute for the underlined word in sentence 14?

- A continue
- B continued
- C continuing
- D Leave as is.

CSL10405.054

The following is a rough draft of a student’s report. It contains errors.

A Family of Stars

(1) William Herschel and his sister Caroline Lucretia Herschel made large contributions to the field of astronomy. (2) William Herschel moved from Germany to England in 1757. (3) He became an organist at a chapel in Bath in 1766. (4) Although he was a musician by occupation, William Herschel developed a growing interest in the skies throughout the 1770s. (5) Unlike many current astronomers, his focus was on distant celestial bodies rather than nearby objects. (6) He began to make telescopes, even grinding his own mirrors to make them large enough to view far into space. (7) His first major find was the discovery of the planet Uranus in 1781, which earned him being famous, the Copley Medal of the Royal Society, and the post of Court Astronomer to King George III. (8) Finally, at the age of 43, he was able to give up music to pursue astronomy full time.

(9) Caroline Herschel joined her brother in Bath in 1772 and became his assistant, recording his observations and calculating the position of various objects in outer space. (10) In 1786 the brother and sister team moved to a house in Slough with a yard big enough for their telescopes. (11) Caroline used these large telescopes to locate a new comet in 1786. (12) This discovery brought Caroline fame, publication in the Royal Society’s journal, and official acknowledgement as William’s assistant, a job which paid 50 pounds per year. (13) After William’s death in 1822, Caroline continued her brother’s work. (14) She won the Royal Astronomical Society’s gold medal in 1828 and became an honorary member in 1835, making her one of the most famous and admired women astronomers.

CSL1P051-3

73 Which of the following is the *best* way to combine sentences 2 and 3?

- A William Herschel moved from Germany to England in 1757, then he became an organist at a chapel in Bath in 1766.
- B When William Herschel moved from Germany to England in 1757, he became an organist at a chapel in Bath in 1766.
- C William Herschel moved from Germany to England in 1757 and became an organist at a chapel in Bath in 1766.
- D Since William Herschel moved from Germany to England in 1757, he became an organist at a chapel in Bath in 1766.

CSL10374.051

74 What is the *best* way to write the underlined words in sentence 7?

- A earning him fame, the Copley Medal of the Royal Society, and gained the post of Court Astronomer to King George III.
- B which earned him fame, won the Copley Medal of the Royal Society, and the post of Court Astronomer to King George III was gained.
- C which earned him fame, won him the Copley Medal of the Royal Society, and gaining the post of Court Astronomer to King George III.
- D which earned him fame, the Copley Medal of the Royal Society, and the post of Court Astronomer to King George III.

CSL10368.051

75 What is the main purpose of this report?

- A** to compare William Herschel’s work to his sister’s
- B** to analyze the relationship between the Herschel siblings
- C** to describe the Herschel siblings’ influence on astronomy
- D** to discuss Caroline Herschel’s discovery of a new comet

CSL10376.051

The following is a rough draft of a student's report. It contains errors.

James Rodriguez
Physical Science
Mrs. Richards
March 24, 2003

Tough Weather on Fragile Islands

1 El Niño is the term used to describe the weather phenomena resulting from the warming of the waters in the Pacific Ocean that flow southward along the coast of South America, around late December. As early as the 1500s, the effects of El Niño were recorded, but in recent history, about every four years, El Niño becomes powerful enough to cause changes all over the world (Wilson 83). Researchers in the Galapagos Islands, about 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, are in a unique position to monitor the effects of El Niño since they are directly in its path (see fig. 1). In 1998, the fragile ecosystem of the Galapagos Islands suffered the devastating impact of the strongest El Niño since 1982–83 (Stewart).



Fig. 1. El Niño's path. Thompson, John R. "El Niño's Wrath Hits Galapagos Islands." *Science*. 4 Apr. 1998, 90.

2 The effects on sea life were the most profound. Warm water temperatures altered the food chain and led to a significant die-off of marine iguana and a decrease in the population of other animals such as sea lions. Fur seals were spotted in places where they are usually absent. Hammerhead sharks all but disappeared from their normal ranges and were found at unusual depths. While sea turtles fared well, the coral reefs, the "rain forests of the oceans," did not (Gaines 17).

3 In fact, the coral bleaching that is the result of temperatures of only a couple of degrees warmer than usual was probably responsible for the wildlife disruption. Corals receive their brilliant coloration from zooxanthellae, a kind of algae that lives within their tissues and is essential for their survival (Wilson 87). When the water is warmer for a sustained period, the coral tissue expels the zooxanthellae, causing the coral to lose its color; this will eventually kill the coral and all the marine life that depend on it (88).

4 It is too early to know the long-term consequences, but scientists at the Charles Darwin Research Station suspect that the 1997–98 El Niño facilitated the establishment and spread of species alien to the Galapagos and altered the kind and number of the old species on the islands (Stewart). Researchers don't know how many times this has happened in the past, but for now, they know that the future of this fragile ecosystem depends on the tough little weather phenomenon called El Niño.

Works Cited

Gaines, James J. Photographs by Herman Robins. “What is El Niño?” *Environmental News*. 16 Feb. 1998, 14–19.

Stewart, Joseph. “El Niño and the Galapagos Island Report.” *New York Times* 28 Aug. 1998, late ed.: K1. *New York Times Online* 24 Mar. 1999.

Thompson, John R. “El Niño’s Wrath Hits Galapagos Islands.” *Science* 4 Apr. 1998, 89–94.

Wilson, Eric K. *Galapagos: Ecotourism on the Equator*. New York: EcoBooks, 1999.

CSLOP008-3

76 James includes a map of El Niño’s path and the Galapagos Islands in order to help the reader

- A visualize the information.
- B organize the information.
- C review the information.
- D research the information.

CSW00092.008

77 What tone is achieved through James’s choice of diction?

- A nostalgic
- B alarming
- C serious
- D humorous

CSW00091.008

78 Which source listed on the Works Cited page was accessed using a computer?

- A Gaines, James J. . . .
- B Stewart, Joseph . . .
- C Thompson, John R. . . .
- D Wilson, Eric K. . . .

CSW00089.008

79 From which source is the last sentence of paragraph 3 taken?

- A Gaines, James J. . . .
- B Stewart, Joseph . . .
- C Thompson, John R. . . .
- D Wilson, Eric K. . . .

CSW00096.008

The following is a rough draft of a student’s report. It contains errors.

NASA Spin-Offs

- 1 What started as a race to space between the United States and Russia has turned out to be a technological revolution that has greatly improved the quality of daily life throughout the world. Scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have invented new technology to make space flights doable. The same technology, when applied on Earth, has produced thousands of products in the areas of health and sports that have significant impacts on our lives.
- 2 Many of these improvements are in the fields of health and medicine. NASA-inspired technology fueled the great advances in the early detection of deadly diseases. For instance, computer chips designed for the Hubble telescope are used in digital imaging devices that help medical professionals detect cancer at very early stages. Eye doctors can now diagnose vision problems in very young children by using ocular screening. Ultrasound scanners, portable x-ray devices, and bone analyzers are among the medical devices developed with the help of space technology.
- 3 Fogless ski goggles and special sportswear are among the hundreds of items of sports equipment inspired by NASA technology. Space technology has been applied to sports too. The running shoes that athletes use today have midsoles that act like shock absorbers and keep the runners steady while in motion. These shoes utilize the technology NASA used to design the moon boot. In golf, athletes use a new ball that employs NASA research on how to make the flight of the ball from the tee to the green faster and more accurate. In swimming, athletes can swim faster because of NASA-developed riblets in the fabric of their swimsuits.
- 4 Almost all aspects of daily life continue to improve because NASA scientists are still at work. Transportation, methods of preparing food, and work environments are other ways in which NASA technology has made significant changes.

CSLIP185-3

Released Test Questions

English–Language Arts

11

80 How can the writer *most* improve paragraph 2?

- A name medical devices developed through space technology
- B provide more information about medical professionals
- C explain how the Hubble telescope helps detect cancer
- D add details about ultrasound scanners, x-ray devices, and bone analyzers

CSL11710.185

81 Which underlined word in the following sentences is *not* consistent with the tone of the rest of the report?

- A Scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have invented new technology to make space flights doable.
- B Many of these improvements are in the fields of health and medicine.
- C In golf, athletes use a new ball that employs NASA research on how to make the flight of the ball from the tee to the green faster and more accurate.
- D Transportation, methods of preparing food, and work environments are other ways in which NASA technology has made significant changes.

CSL11707.185

82 Which paragraph needs to be revised so that the topic sentence is placed in a more logical position in the paragraph?

- A paragraph 1
- B paragraph 2
- C paragraph 3
- D paragraph 4

CSL11711.185

83 Which of the following *best* states the writer's apparent purpose in this report?

- A to inform readers about NASA-inspired improvements in lifestyle
- B to entertain readers with stories about NASA
- C to compare the work of NASA and Russian scientists
- D to persuade readers to do more research about lifestyle improvements

CSL11715.185

84 Which sentence from the report expresses the writer's point of view?

- A What started as a race to space between the United States and Russia has turned out to be a technological revolution that has greatly improved the quality of daily life throughout the world.
- B NASA-inspired technology fueled the great advances in the early detection of deadly diseases.
- C Fogless ski goggles and special sportswear are among the hundreds of items of sports equipment inspired by NASA technology.
- D The running shoes that athletes use today have midsoles that act like shock absorbers and keep the runners steady while in motion.

CSL11709.185

85 Which of these would *best* support the main idea of the report?

- A a statement from a doctor who uses space technology for diagnoses
- B examples of sports equipment used in different sports
- C a description of the race between the United States and Russia
- D more details about running shoes and their components

CSL11712.185