

# Shooting an elephant by george orwell



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In *Shooting an Elephant* George Orwell recounted an event from his life during his stationary in Burma, that he detested. He was stuck in the middle of the situation between Burmese and British imperialism. He was faced with a moral dilemma, forcing him to make unanticipated choices leaving long-lasting effects to him as to save his pride.

Orwell presented the strained tension between the Burmese and British during his time he served in Burma. All of his hatred towards British imperialism and Burmese made him feel isolated. As he described, "... imperialism was an evil thing..." (750). The bitter feelings between the two created an invisible wall leaving Orwell to be in the center of the situation. He hated the natives because he was receiving the bitter feelings from them, as it was towards the oppressive British empire.

Orwell didn't fit in the society because even though he was a British officer, his insight of the empire was evil. As he described, you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters (750). As an officer, he saw the insight of cruelty that was enforced by the Britishers through the closed doors. Orwell never got himself involved between the two evils and only waited until his serving is over. However, he encounters one of the turning points in his life with the incident of the beast.

This defining moment drove Orwell into the standing position of choosing between two inexpedient alternatives. As the elephant in heat rampage through the village and resulted in killing a Coolie. Orwell exchanged his .44 rifle with an elephant gun, thus rose the Burmese expectation of a sahib. Seen from the circumference of the field, the elephant "must" had past and

was in no harm. Nonetheless, an army of Burmese breathing heavily on Orwell's shoulders assumed a show to go on. Giving him a standing position of being empowered, the growth of natives soon rattles him. Sighting the elephant peacefully eating grass, gave him the rationalization that he shouldn't eliminate the elephant; as it was a priceless and beneficial beast.

He soon realized that it was a vital faux pas, for the firearm rendered the Burmese presumption. One choice was to let the beast live, following his morals, and abide the mockery of the Burmese. The other option was to omit his conscience and shoot the elephant. Orwell was conflicted as to choose between the life of the beast or his prestige. He must shoot the elephant in order to present a strong reputation: The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would pursued There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim (754). He didn't focus on his conscience and acted upon the motivation from the thoughts of shame. The sound of the gunshots and the images of the beast slow death was still imprinted in his mind after many years. He was bothered by the fact that his pride was too high, causing him to ignore his morals.

Some choices are made by the expectations of others and not their morals. Those little trivial decisions can affect one's life later in the years. When one encounters an elephant and is indecisive as to kill the beast in order to please the crowd or following one's conscience but is a laughing stock. Whichever it may be, this will forever be imprinted in one's mind.