

Poem
10

The Hollow Men

(T. S. Eliot)

Words and Expressions

lean	– bend; incline; bank
cellar	– basement; underground room
paralysed	– crippled

جھکنا، سہارا لینا
زیر زمین کمرہ، تہہ خانہ، گودام
مفلوج

Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the correct synonym.

- We are the **hollow** men.
A) nostalgic B) headstrong
C) violent D) worthless
- We are the **stuffed** men.
A) ambitious B) unreal
C) stunned D) primitive
- Leaning** together.
A) bending B) standing
C) moving D) whispering
- Headpiece** filled with straw.
A) sense B) skull
C) vision D) body
- Headpiece filled with **straw**.
A) ambition B) vanity
C) pride D) trash
- Our dried voices when / we **whisper** together...
A) groan B) communicate
C) whistle D) murmur
- Or rat's feet over broken glass in our dry **cellar**.
A) hallway B) residence
C) basement D) living room
- Paralysed** force, gesture without motion.
A) violent B) energized
C) crippled D) spent
- Paralysed force **gesture** without motion.
(Board 2018)
A) message B) curiosity
C) position D) signal
- Not as lost **violent** souls, but only...
A) dumb B) humble
C) aggressive D) sinful
- Those who have **crossed** / With direct eyes, to death's other kingdom...
A) passed over B) maintained
C) remained D) persisted

Answers

1. D	3. A	5. D	7. C	9. D	11. A
2. B	4. B	6. D	8. C	10. C	

Questions and Answers

Q.1 Why does the poet call modern men the hollow men?

(Board 2007, 10)

OR

Who are the hollow men?

Ans. The poet calls the modern men hollow because they lack humanism. Their souls have become dead and they are living a life of materialism. The poet condemns the spiritual emptiness of modern man.

Q.2 What do the expressions "wind in dry grass" and "rat's feet over broken glass" suggest?

Ans. These expressions show how ineffective the modern man has become. His words and actions are expressionless and carry no weight. Their voices are dried and what they say is as meaningless as the rustling of wind or the skittering of rats over shattered glass in a dry cellar.

Q.3 What is the significance of the expressions "shape without form, shade without colour"?

Ans. The expressions show the hollowness of the modern man. He has no inner composition. He exists only outwardly but inwardly he is too hollow to produce any shadow or impression. It is the inward death of the modern man that Eliot laments.

Q.4 What does the poet say in the last stanza of the poem "The Hollow Men"?

OR

What does the poet say about those who have crossed to death's other kingdom?

Ans. In this stanza, the poet feels sorry for the modern man as he is not going to be remembered by the departed ones as an active and functional being but as an inactive and empty soul.

Q.5 What is the theme of the poem "The Hollow Men"?

OR

What does the title of the poem "The Hollow Men" suggest?

(Board 2015)

Ans. "The Hollow Men" is an elegy on modern life and the twentieth century European man. The poem laments the spiritual barrenness, materialistic attitude, moral degradation and aimlessness of modern man. It depicts that modern man is incapable of taking right decisions for the good of mankind.

Q.6 Who is the author of "The Hollow Men"?

Ans. T. S. Eliot is the author of "The Hollow Men."

Q.7 Why does the poet consider hollow men useless for a nation? (Board 2018)

Ans. The modern man, in his extreme desire for worldly gains and objectives, has left far behind all the noble traits of head and heart. The noble characteristics of compassion, sympathy and sacrifice have been dominated by deceit, hypocrisy, hatred and backbiting. How can such people be useful for a nation?

Explanation with Reference to the Context

Stanza 1:

We are the hollow men
 We are the stuffed men
 Leaning together
 Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
 Our dried voices, when
 We whisper together
 Are quiet and meaningless
 As wind in dry grass
 Or rats' feet over broken glass
 In our dry cellar.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from "The Hollow Men" by T.S. Eliot.

Context:

Eliot criticizes the crumbling moral fabric of modern society brought on by the advent of science and the declining importance of religion in the everyday lives of people. The poem

presents the poet's views on the contemporary life. It laments the spiritual barrenness, materialistic attitude, moral degradation and aimlessness of modern man.

Explanation:

According to T.S. Eliot, the 20th century man is a hollow man. He has become spiritually dead. He is stuffed, unnatural and bears no reality. His actions are as ineffective and his speech as meaningless as wind in dry grass or rats' feet over broken glass. So the modern man has become a pathetic picture. Nothing substantial is expected of him as he is hollow from within and his soul has gone dead. He has turned into a living corpse. The poem urges the modern man to action with a positive attitude to cope with the challenges the mankind faces today.

Stanza 2:

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;
Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us—if at all—not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

(Board 2012)

Reference:

These lines have been taken from "The Hollow Men" by T. S. Eliot.

Context:

Eliot criticizes the crumbling moral fabric of modern society brought on by the advent of science and the declining importance of religion in the everyday lives of people. The poem presents the poet's views on the contemporary life. It laments the spiritual barrenness, materialistic attitude, moral degradation and aimlessness of modern man.

Explanation:

These lines draw a vivid picture of the hollowness of the twentieth century men. In the materialistic world of today, people have become soulless. They have no form and colour. They seem to have no strength at all. Those who have already died would not remember the modern men as violent and ambitious fellows but as puppets made of straw. The picture refers to individuals in an industrialized society where human beings are no more than a commodity.