1. To the eyes of the public, the elephant was a tyrant, one that would disrupt the peace of the street and wild at heart. Orwell sought for a way to end the negative perception of him by the townsmen and raise his “social standards” to that of something higher, a stereotypical sahib. This standard adds an immense amount of pressure by the people of the town, Orwell left to choose between shooting the elephant for high praise, or to leave the gentle giant at peace, further dropping his already low view from the public. In this situation he decides to shoot the elephant.

2. Orwell writes the following: “For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the ‘natives’ and so in every crisis he has got to do what the ‘natives’ expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it”(Orwell). Hidden behind the descriptive metaphors is Orwell’s thoughts on society. He believes that there is an unspoken social standard that is a product of multiple derivatives of selfishness; a stereotype that one must and should abide by. The consequences of not agreeing to these standards leaves one with a barrage of hatred so great, morality does not have a say in deciding your choices. Regardless of how much Orwell wanted to save the elephant, he knew that the public would never accept him if he had left it alive. He takes the initiative to make an excuse to kill the elephant and hides his regret with more bullets. It was what the people wanted.

3.Orwell’s essay was littered with gruesome descriptions in order to complete the regretful tone of the essay. One of which was: “He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes…. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on hi belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony” (Orwell).

4. Ever since I was young, I never felt the need to conform to the peer. It was fully engraved into me when there was a fourth grade program that inspired me to begin ignoring peer pressure. I had become what the school called “Peer Helper”. It was a role given to “selected” students who went through a week of training that rewarded them with a bright neon t-shirt and vest. This allowed not only the teachers, but the students of all years to recognize these “Peer Helpers” around campus. We were trained to be role models and in a way became the school’s “face.” I believe this program to minimize the number of bullies in the school was a huge success. I learned to always take a step back during pressured situations and weight the cause and effect to my future. Is the pressure worth it or will it just hurt my morality?

5. I strongly believe the elephant symbolizes one’s free will. His decision to shoot the elephant was not his, but one of the majority. As it states in his own essay: “He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it” (Orwell). To simplify, shooting the elephant makes him somebody that he is not. He wears a mask. The effects of peer pressure only spreads at a greater speed, forcing him to catch up to a standard he did not ask for, so he grows to fit that mask.