Why Literature? by Mario Vargas Llosa
&
Two Cultures by C.P. Snow

Questions & Assignment by Andrew Gottlieb

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Introduction

At the end of this semester, students in English 101 will be given a departmental exam designed by the English Department to evaluate writing proficiency. The exam is also intended to be a measure of reading comprehension. The ability to interpret the reading selections is weighed as heavily in the evaluation process as is the ability to write coherent and grammatically correct prose. Students will be expected to write a comparison/contrast essay about two texts first for homework and then on the final exam. One of these is Why Literature? by Mario Vargas Llosa; the other is Two Cultures by P.C. Snow.

It is thus crucial that students become well versed in articulating the similarities and differences between these two texts. This is a subtle affair. Though both Llosa and Snow are writing about trends in contemporary intellectual communities, the links between their ideas may seem arcane. I once studied with a teacher who said “If it’s not difficult, it’s not worthwhile.” It is with this in mind that I believe the challenge we are facing is a good one. Though the task may seem overwhelming at first, in time, it will become manageable. I have designed this unit to facilitate the process. Included are conversation questions, writing assignments, a sample essay, and test preparation.
Conversation Questions for Why Literature by Mario Vargas Llosa

1. “Of course I like to read, but I am a very busy person.” I have heard this explanation dozens of times: this man and many thousands of men like him have so many important things to do, so many obligations, so many responsibilities in life, that they cannot waste their precious time buried in a novel, a book of poetry, or a literary essay for hours and hours. According to this wide-spread conception, literature is a dispensable activity, no doubt lofty and useful for cultivating sensitivity and good manners, but essentially an entertainment, an adornment that only people with time for recreation can afford. It is something to fit in between sports, the movies, a game of bridge or chess; and it can be sacrificed without scruple when one “prioritizes” the tasks and the duties that are indispensable in the struggle of life (1).”

   a. In your own words, explain the wide-spread conception to which Llosa is referring.

   b. Do you agree this is a wide-spread conception?

   c. Do you relate to this idea? Do you see literature as “dispensable activity?”

   d. What are your priorities?
2. “…I am convinced that a society without literature, or a society in which literature has been relegated – like some hidden vice – to the margins of social and personal life, and transformed into something of a sectarian cult, is a society condemned to become spiritually barbaric, and even to jeopardize its freedom (1).”

What, according Llosa, is wrong with a society in which literature has been marginalized? Explain why you agree or disagree with him?

3. Why might literature be an “irreplaceable activity for the formation of citizens in a modern and democratic society, a society of free individuals (1)?” What could reading literature have to do with freedom and democratic society?
4. “We live in the era of specialization of knowledge, thanks to the prodigious development of science and technology and to the consequent fragmentation of knowledge into innumerable parcels and compartments. This cultural trend is, if anything, likely to be accentuated in years to come. To be sure, specialization brings many benefits. It allows for deeper exploration and greater experimentation; it is the very engine of progress. Yet it also has negative consequences, for it eliminates those common intellectual and cultural traits that permit men and women to coexist, to communicate, to feel a sense of solidarity. Specialization leads to a lack of social understanding, to the division of human beings into ghettos of technicians and specialists. The specialization of knowledge requires specialized languages and arcane codes, as information becomes more and more specific and compartmentalized. This is the particularism and the division against which an old proverb warned us: do not focus too much on the branch or the leaf, lest you forget that they are part of a forest. Awareness of the existence of the forest creates the feeling of generality, the feeling of belonging, that binds society together and prevents it from disintegrating into a myriad of solipsistic particularities. The solipsism of nations and individuals produces paranoia and delirium, distortions of reality that generate hatred, wars, and even genocide (1-2).”

a. According to Llosa, what is the source of specialization?

b. According to Llosa, what are the advantages and disadvantages of specialization?
c. How do you think the issue of specialization relate to the marginalization of literature (1)?”


d. What is the relevance of the proverb “do not focus too much on the branch or the leaf, lest you forget that they are part of a forest” to Llosa’s discussion of specialization and the marginalization of literature (2)?”


e. How might specialization help to create a society prone to hatred, war, and genocide?
5. “In our time, science and technology cannot play an integrating role, precisely because of the infinite richness of knowledge and the speed of its evolution, which have led to specialization and its obscurities. But literature has been, and will continue to be, as long as it exists, one of the common denominators of human experience through which human beings may recognize themselves and converse with each other, no matter how different their professions, their life plans, their geographical and cultural locations, their personal circumstances. It has enabled individuals, in all the particularities of their lives, to transcend history: as readers of Cervantes, Shakespeare, Dante, and Tolstoy, we understand each other across space and time, and we feel ourselves to be members of the same species because, in the works that these writers created, we learn what we share as human beings, what remains common in all of us under the broad range of differences that separate us. Nothing better protects a human being against the stupidity of prejudice, racism, religious or political sectarianism, and exclusivist nationalism than this truth that invariably appears in great literature: that all men and women of all nations and places are essentially equal, and that only injustice sows among them discrimination, fear, and exploitation (2).”

a. How does Llosa compare the effect of science/technology and literature on society?

b. How can literature protect “a human being against the stupidity of prejudice, racism, religious or political sectarianism, and exclusivist nationalism (2)?”
6. "Nothing teaches us better than literature to see, in ethnic and cultural differences, the richness of the human patrimony, and to prize those differences as a manifestation of humanity’s multifaceted creativity (2)."

   How, according to Llosa, does literature affect our way of viewing the ethic and cultural differences between us?

7. What, according to Llosa is the meaning of Proust’s observation that “real life, at last enlightened and revealed, the only life fully lived, is literature (2-3)?”

8. What does Llosa regard as “highest achievement of culture (3)?”
9. “Literature does not begin to exist through the work of a single individual? It exists only when it is adopted by others and becomes a part of social life – when it becomes, thanks to reading, a shared experience (3).”

Why might literature exist only when it becomes a shared experience?

10. How, according to Llosa, does the marginalization limit the level of language, intellect, and imagination?

11. According to Llosa, what effect does literature have on the way people conduct themselves in romantic encounters? What does he mean when he writes that “without literature, eroticism would not exist (4)?”
12. What does Llosa think of Bill Gates’s highest goal? What effect might the substitution of all paper texts with computer screens have on our society?

13. “Literature says nothing to those human beings who are satisfied with their lot, who are content with life as they now live it. Literature is the food of the rebellious spirit, the promulgator of nonconformities, the refuge for those who have too much or too little in life. One seeks sanctuary in literature so as not to be unhappy and so as not to be incomplete. To ride alongside the scrawny Rocinante and the confused Knight on the fields of La Mancha, to sail the seas on the back of a whale with Captain Ahab, to drink arsenic with Emma Bovary, to become an insect with Gregor Samsa: these are all ways that we have invented to divest ourselves of the wrongs and the impositions of this unjust life, a life that forces us always to be the same person when we wish to be many different people, so as to satisfy the many desires that possess us (5).”

How is literature “food for the rebellious spirit (5)?”
14. “Literature pacifies this vital dissatisfaction only momentarily – but in this miraculous instant, in this provisional suspension of life, literary illusion lifts and transports us outside history, and we become citizens of a timeless land, and in this way immortal. We become more intense, richer, more complicated, happier, and more lucid than we are in the constrained routine of ordinary life. When we close the book and abandon literary fiction, we return to actual existence and compare it to the splendid land that we have just left. What a disappointment awaits us! Yet a tremendous realization also awaits us, namely, that the fantasized life of the novel is better – more beautiful and more diverse, more comprehensible and more perfect – than the life that we live while awake, a life conditioned by the limits and the tedium of our condition. In this way, good literature, genuine literature, is always subversive, unsubmitive, rebellious: a challenge to what exists (5-6).”

According to Llosa, how does literature transform us? How does it challenge our way of seeing things?

15. “How could we not feel cheated after reading War and Peace or Remembrance of Things Past and returning to our world of insignificant details, of boundaries and prohibitions that lie in wait everywhere and, with each step, corrupt our illusions (6)?”

a. How can literature corrupt our illusions?

b. Why would we feel cheated when our illusion are corrupted?
16. “A free and democratic society must have responsible and critical citizens conscious of the need continuously to examine the world that we inhabit and to try, even though it is more and more an impossible task, to make it more closely resemble the world that we would like to inhabit. And there is no better means of fomenting dissatisfaction with existence than the reading of good literature; no better means of forming critical and independent citizens who will not be manipulated by those who govern them, and who are endowed with a permanent spiritual mobility and a vibrant imagination (6).”

How, according to Llosa, does literature help to maintain a free and democratic society?

17. “Good literature, while temporarily relieving human dissatisfaction, actually increases it, by developing a critical and nonconformist attitude toward life. It might even be said that literature makes human beings more likely to be unhappy (6).”

What is the upside of the unhappiness to which Llosa refers?

18. What is Llosa’s vision of a possible future for literature? (7)

Do you share his concerns?
19. In your own words, explain Llosa’s concerns?
Conversation Questions for *Two Cultures* by C.P. Snow

1. In the opening line of his essay Snow writes, “It is about three years since I made a sketch in print of a problem which has been on my mind for some time (1).”

   “For this is not just our problem; owing to some of our educational and social idiosyncrasies, it is slightly exaggerated here, owing to another English social peculiarity it is slightly minimized; by and large this is a problem of the entire West. [...] I believe the intellectual life of the whole western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. [...] Literary intellectuals at one pole – at the other scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension – sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. They have a curious distorted image of each other. Their attitudes are so different that, even on the level of emotion, they can’t find much common ground. (1-2).”

   In your own words, explain the problem to which Snow is alluding?

2. What are the two cultures to which Snow is referring?

3. How, according to Snow, have literary intellectuals and scientists come to view each other? Make a list of these perceptions.
4. “This polarization is sheer loss to us all. To us as people, and to our society. It is at the same
time practical and intellectual and creative loss… (3).”

What, according to Snow, are the losses incurred by the polarization of the two cultures?

5. How, according to Snow are scientists impoverished? (4)

6. How, according to Snow are literary intellectuals impoverished? (4-5)
7. “I said earlier that this cultural divide is not just an English phenomenon: it exists all over the western world. But it probably seems at its sharpest in England, for two reasons. One is our fanatical belief in educational specialization, which is more deeply ingrained in us than in any country in the world, west or east. The other is our tendency to let our social forms crystallize. This tendency appears to get stronger, not weaker, the more we iron out economic inequalities: and this is especially true in education. It means that once anything like a cultural divide gets established, all the social forces operate to make it not less rigid, but more so.”

a. What according to Snow are the two primary reasons for the polarization of the two cultures, what he refers to in this particular passage as the “cultural divide?”

b. What do you think Snow means by “our tendency to let our social forms crystallize (5).”

8. How, according to Snow, has the cultural divide changed in recent years? (6)
9. “Nearly everyone will agree that our school education is too specialized (6).”

What role does specialization play in creating and maintaining the cultural divide?

10. “It may well be that this process has gone too far to be reversible. I have given reasons why I think it is a disastrous process, for the purpose of living culture. I think it is fatal if we’re to perform our practical tasks in the world (6).”

Do you think Snow’s conclusion is optimistic or pessimistic?

11. In your own words explain Snow’s idea.
Writing Assignments:

Pick one of the following and write about it.

1. Llosa is concerned with the marginalization of literature. Snow is concerned with the polarization of two cultures, namely, literary intellectuals and scientist. How are their ideas similar? How are they different?

2. Compare and Contrast *Why Literature?* and *Two Cultures*. What do Llosa and Snow have in common? Are there any differences between them? If so, what are these? If the two men were to meet, what do you think they would have to say to each other? How would Llosa assess Snows ideas? How would Snow assess Llosa’s ideas?

3. Both Llosa and Snow discuss the effect of specialization. Write a paper about this topic. Include citations from both writers along with your own observations.

4. Both Llosa and Snow discuss the interplay between literature and science. Write a paper discussing your understanding of the role of these two disciplines in our culture. Make references to the ideas expressed by Llosa and Snow.

5. Llosa expresses his concern for the marginalization of literature. Snow refers to the polarization of the two cultures or “cultural divide” as a “disastrous process (6).” Write a paper discussing the topic of optimism and pessimism in regard to contemporary intellectual communities. Make reference to the essays by Llosa and Snow.

More assignment are on the following page.
6. Llosa:
“…I am convinced that a society without literature, or a society in which literature has been relegated – like some hidden vice – to the margins of social and personal life, and transformed into something of a sectarian cult, is a society condemned to become spiritually barbaric, and even to jeopardize its freedom (1).”

Snow:
“It is much more that the whole literature of traditional culture doesn”t seem to them (scientists of our time) relevant to those interests. They are, of course, dead wrong. As a result, their imaginative understand is less than it could be. They are self-impoverished. But what about the other side? They are impoverished too – and perhaps more seriously, because they are vainer about it. They still like to pretend that the traditional culture is the whole of culture, as though the natural order didn”t exist. As though the exploration of the natural order was of no interest either in its own value or its consequences. As though the scientific edifice of the physical world was not, in its intellectual depth, complexity and articulation, the most beautiful and wonderful collective work of the mind of man. Yet most non-scientists have no conception of that edifice at all. Even if they want to have it, they can”t. It is rather as though, over an immense range of intellectual experience, a whole group was tone-deaf. Except that this tone-deafness doesn”t come by nature, but by training, or rather the absence of training (4-5).”

Based on these two excerpts from, how would you say the assessments of the place of literature in today”s world by Llosa and Snow are similar? How are they different?

7. Llosa writes: “In our time, science and technology cannot play an integrating role, precisely because of the infinite richness of knowledge and the speed of its evolution, which have led to specialization and its obscurities (2).”

What do you think Snow would have to say about this statement? Would he agree that science and technology in our time cannot play an integrating role? Explain why you agree or disagree with Llosa.
Specifications for
The Writing Assignment

PAPERS MUST SATISFY ALL OF THE SPECIFICATIONS
TO RECEIVE CREDIT.

1. Each essay must be typed.

2. Font size must be 12.

3. Font style must be Times New Roman.

4. The name of the student, professor, course, and date must be flush left with a double-space between each. See example on the following page.

5. Each essay must be double-spaced.

6. For citations more than one sentences, use the following specifications. See example on the following page.
   a. single-space
   b. font size 10
   c. left indent at 1  right indent at 5.5.

7. Each paragraph must be indented.

8. There must be no more than one double-space between paragraphs.

9. Each page of each essay must be numbered in the upper right-hand corner.

10. Each essay must be stapled in the upper left-hand corner.

11. Documentation must include a “Works Cited” page and be done according to MLA formats. See example on the following page.
This is an example of the top of the first page of a research paper. Use double-spaces. The title must be a double-space below the date and centered. See *MLA Handbook* - Seventh Edition. 4.3. Heading And Title. 116.

John Smith
Professor Abraham
English 201
May 7, 2009
Greek Tragedy

This is an example of the top of the first page of a works-cited list. Entries are in alphabetical order with second lines of each entry indented (*hanging indentation*). See *MLA Handbook* - Seventh Edition. 131.

**Works Cited**


This is an example of how to do a citation longer than one sentence.

“In the very first year of our century Sigmund Freud in his *Interpretation of Dreams* offered a famous and influential interpretation of Oedipus the King:

Oedipus Rex is what is known as a tragedy of destiny. Its tragic effect is said to lie in the contrast between supreme will of the gods and the vain attempts of mankind to escape the evil that threatens them. The lesson which, it is said, the deeply moved spectator should learn from the tragedy is submission to the divine will and realization of his own impotence.  

(Trans. James Strachey)

This passage is of course a landmark in the history of modern thought, and it is fascinating to observe that this idea, which, valid or not, has had enormous influence, stems from an attempt to answer a literary problem – why does the play have this overpowering effect on modern audiences?”

Sample Essay for Assignment Number 1:

Llosa is concerned with the marginalization of literature. Snow is concerned with the polarization of two cultures, namely, literary intellectuals and scientist. How are their ideas similar? How are they different?

Andrew Gottlieb

English 201

June 10, 2011

Llosa versus Snow
Marginalization and Polarization

One of the most compelling aspect of history concerns the ebb and flow of intellectual discourse and the scholarly and scientific communities in which such discourse transpires. There is also the question of the broader impact that the rise and fall of certain trends in such communities may have. These considerations are the focus of two essays: Why Literature? by Mario Vargas Llosa and Two Cultures by C.P. Snow. In his essay, Llosa expresses concern for the marginalization of literature. Snow focuses on the polarization of two cultures, namely the culture of literary intellectuals and the scientific community. Both attribute these problems to the ever-growing trend toward specialization. It does not require a great leap to see that Snow’s polarization entails marginalization. When literary intellectuals limit their inquiries to the arts, they are marginalizing science. When scientists limit their inquiries to matters of science, they are marginalizing literature. In this respect, Llosa and Snow are on the same page. They share a common concern for the losses incurred in the intellectual community by the increasing tendency toward specialization and compartmentalization. The difference between Llosa and
Snow is evinced by the fact that Llosa sees literature as the *uniquely* potent force for unification in human affairs. Science and technology, he believes have no such power. It is arguable that from Snow’s perspective Llosa’s assertion is consistent with the polarizing mindset of the contemporary community of literary intellectuals in that it appears to be relegating science to an inferior position in regard to the quest for solidarity, or more specifically the intention to counteract the depletion of what may be regarded as a Renaissance sensibility entailing an awareness of and appreciation for the interconnectedness of diverse fields of knowledge.

At the outset of his essay, Llosa discusses what he refers to as a “widespread conception,” namely, that literature is a “dispensable activity.” Concomitant with this marginalization of literature is the prioritization of survival based activities. To focus on such activities, in his view, at the expense of what literature has to offer generates results in a society devoid of spirituality and freedom. The culprit, he explains is the increasingly pervasive trend toward specialization. Due to the advancement of science and technology, intellectual communities have become compartmentalized. The result is a limitation of three aspects of human relations: verbal discourse, intellect, and love. Without an appreciation of the nuances of language one’s verbal skill are impoverished. The impoverishment of language invariably leads to a narrowing of intellect and imagination since ideas and visions are indispensably woven into the fabric of the language used to express them. Even our ability express love is limited or augmented to the degree to which we have assimilated the nuances of literary modes of discourse. “In an illiterate world,” Llosa maintains, “love and desire would be no different from what satisfies animals, nor would they transcend the crude fulfillment of elementary instincts (4).”
A further consequence of specialization, Llosa explaines, is the disintegration of solidarity and a feeling of belonging. He even posits that the trend toward particularization can generate “distortions of reality that generate hatred, wars, and even genocide (1-2).” He also points out that literature offers a sense of commonality for those of us who are not satisfied with the world as it is. “Literature,” he writes is the food of the rebellious spirit (5).” It is of greatest value to the non-conformist who sees through the veneer of conventional wisdom. Literature, Llosa adds, offers us the opportunity to enter into a realm of imagination in which we need not be limited by the usual constraints of identity. Reading allows us to explore different sides of our nature and as such to become different people and to satisfy desires which are, in the concourse of everyday, life beyond our reach.

One of the primary points Llosa makes is that science and technology cannot accomplish what literature can. In Llosa’s view science and technology, not literature, is the wellspring of specialization. He sees literature as having a wider, more universal application and consequently the potential to instill in its readers a sense of commonality, equality and justice. For Llosa brotherhood is for Llosa the “highest achievement of culture,” and it is through literature, and apparently literature alone, that this goal can be attained. It is this assertion that signifies the difference between Llosa and Snow.

Snow’s essay focuses on a problem he identifies as the polarization of cultures, by which he means the gulf between literary intellectuals and scientists. He discusses the ways in which this polarization results in the impoverishment of the intellectual life of both the scientists and the non-scientist. He affirms that the impoverishment of the non-scientists is perhaps even more serious than that of the scientist because “they are vainer about it” and “still like to pretend that
the traditional culture is the whole of culture (4).” One wonders how Snow would regard Llosa’s assertion that science and technology in our time “cannot play an integrating role (2),” and that literature can. From Snow’s perspective such a view may well be seen as part and parcel of the polarization about which he is so concerned. Snow offers no hint of hierarchy in any respect regarding literature and science. On the contrary, we may infer that such a perspective would minimize the chances of overriding the polarizing mindset to which Snow alludes. By saying that literature can do what science and technology cannot, it is arguable that Llosa is affirming a superior position for the former and as such could be seen to be partaking in Snow’s “cultural divide (5).”

Whether Llosa’s assertion is genuinely polarizing is debatable. Llosa does not affirm that all science and technology cannot have an integrating effect. He refers specifically to the science and technology “in our time,” and goes on to explain that the reason science and technology cannot have an integrating effect is “because of the infinite richness of knowledge and the speed of its evolution, which have led to specialization and its obscurities (2).” This implies that the root of the limitation is that most people, including perhaps literary intellectuals like Llosa are unable to keep up with the pace set by the scientific community in recent years. It is conceivable that the rate at which technology has been growing is faster than it was in the past, yet it is also arguable that the ideas of science when first propounded were always beyond the reach of those outside the discipline. It is also true that any number of scientific conceptions were beyond the reach of the majority of even those who specialized in certain fields. The theories of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Maxwell, and Einstein were not initially accepted or understood by all members of the scientific community of their times. If literature, as Llosa points out, provides us with a common denominator, it is because it does not appear
to require specialized knowledge to gain at least some understanding of the material. The language of literature is by and large more accessible than the language of physics. It is arguable that from Snow’s perspective, the assertion that this makes literature a uniquely integrative force is part of the problem. The fact that Llosa attributes this particular shortcoming of science to its obscurities implies that it is limited only for the uninformed. Information and ideas are arcane only for those who have not spent whatever time it takes to get to know them. Snow maintains that “most non-scientists have no conception of (the scientific edifice) at all,” and goes on to attribute this to an “absence of training (5).”

Whatever differences there may be between Llosa and Snow, the similarities may well be more important. For Llosa the problem is the marginalization of literature. For Snow it is the polarization of two cultures. What they share in common is the idea that the problems upon which they have chosen to focus have the same underlying cause. Both the marginalization of literature and the polarization of two cultures stem from an ever-growing tendency toward specialization. This is the root of both problems.

Llosa and Snow’s assessment is accurate not only in regard to the current climate in intellectual communities but in others as well. In recent years the habit of doctors to send their patients to specialists prior to making any attempt at treating the ailment on their own has been on the rise. General practitioners do not seem to trust their own judgement. It is the specialist who assumes the role of primary care physician. As such, the tradition of the family doctor in certain respects is as marginalized as the tradition of literary discourse.

The overriding tendency common to both Llosa’s marginalization and Snow’s polarization is a kind of myopia. For Llosa the shortsightedness is signified by the prioritization of survival of the body at the expense of the elevation of the mind. For Snow the same tendency
is evinced in the tendency to focus on literary pursuits at the expense of gaining knowledge of science or to focus on science at the expense of gaining knowledge of literature. In either case a loss is incurred.

In my view, the problem underlying all of this is the tendency to replace the concept of a liberal arts education with one that spearheads the more earthbound goal of career advancement. The idea of learning for the sake of enlightenment has become increasingly passé. It is not unreasonable to assume that Llosa and Snow would agree that specialization and the resulting fragmentation of intellectual communities is a direct outgrowth of a materialistic mindset.

For Llosa, the solution is reading. Snow offers no solution and says that the situation may be irreversible. This is not an unreasonable supposition. Given the mounting proliferation of knowledge, it has become increasingly difficult to gain any level of expertise in more than one discipline. This, however, does not mean that the value of a liberal arts education is defunct. It is so only if one approaches learning solely for the purpose of getting ahead. If, however, learning becomes the means of attaining a higher level of consciousness, the reverse is true, for to attain such a goal, one must be more than a specialist. It is the broadening of perspective, the ability to see the interconnectedness of diverse branches of knowledge that is the essence of higher education and the enlightenment. If Llosa and Snow succeed in reinvigorating this sensibility it will only be with the help of all of us who share their view.

Test Preparation

*Why Literature?* by Mario Vargas Llosa

*Two Cultures* by C.P. Snow

One way to prepare for the final exam is to memorize key points in the two texts. The goal is to be able to summarize portions of these quickly and easily. This knowledge will not lock you into a rigid approach to answering questions. You are not memorizing an essay. You are simply memorizing the salient portions of the text. As such, you will be in a position to make use of your knowledge with a certain degree of flexibility. Summarization can be useful regardless of the question and usually test questions required that you summarized at least a part of what you have read.

**Step One:**
Make up a list of key words.

1. widespread conception – dispensable – marginalization
2. specialization
3. solidarity
4. limitation
5. rebellious spirit
6. literature versus science and technology
7. polarization- cultural divide
8. solution

**Step Two:**
Write paragraphs corresponding to the key words.

1. marginalization

   At the outset of his essay, Llosa discusses what he refers to as a “widespread conception,” namely, that literature is a “dispensable activity.” Concomitant with this marginalization of literature is the prioritization of survival based activities. To focus on such activities, in his view, at the expense of what literature has to offer results, in Llosa’s view, in a society devoid of spirituality and freedom.

2. specialization

   The culprit, he explains is the ever-growing trend toward specialization. Due to the advancement of science and technology, knowledge has become compartmentalized.
3. **solidarity**

A consequence of such compartmentalization, Llosa continues is the disintegration of **solidarity** a feeling of belonging. He even posits that the trend toward particularization can generate “distortions of reality that generate hatred, wars, and even genocide (1-2).”

4. **limitation**

Llosa affirms that the marginalization of literature results in **limitation** in three aspects of human relations: verbal discourse, intellect, and love. Without an appreciation of the nuances of language one’s verbal skill are impoverished. The impoverishment of language invariably leads to a narrowing of intellect and imagination since ideas and visions are indispensably woven into the fabric of the language used to express them. Even our ability express love is limited or augmented to the degree to which we have assimilated the nuances of literary modes of discourse. “In an illiterate world,” Llosa maintains, “love and desire would be no different from what satisfies animals, nor would they transcend the crude fulfillment of elementary instincts (4).”

5. **rebellious spirit**

In Llosa’s view literature offers a sense of commonality for those of us who are not satisfied with the world as it is. “Literature,” he writes is the food of the rebellious spirit (5).” It is of greatest value to the non-conformist who sees through the veneer of conventional wisdom. Literature, Llosa adds, offers us the opportunity to enter into a realm of imagination in which we need not be limited by the usual constraints of identity. Reading allows us to explore different sides of our nature and as such to become different people and to satisfy desires which are, in the concourse of everyday life, beyond our reach.

6. **literature versus science and technology**

One of the primary points Llosa makes is that science and technology cannot accomplish what literature can. In Llosa’s view **science and technology**, not **literature**, is the source of specialization. He sees literature as having a wider, more universal application and consequently the potential to instill in its readers a sense of equality and justice. This sense of brotherhood is for Llosa the “highest achievement of culture,” and it is through literature, and apparently **literature alone**, that this goal can be attained. It is this assertion that signifies the difference between Llosa and Snow.
7. polarization- cultural divide

Snow’s essay focuses on a problem he identifies as **polarization** of cultures, by which he means the gulf between literary intellectuals and scientists. He discusses the ways in which this polarization results in the impoverishment of the intellectual life of both the scientists and the non-scientist. He affirms that the impoverishment of the non-scientists is perhaps even more serious than that of the scientist because “they are vainer about it” and “still like to pretend that the traditional culture is the whole of culture (4).”

8. solution

For Llosa, the **solution** is reading. Snow offers no solution and says that the situation may be irreversible. This is not unreasonable. Given the mounting proliferation of knowledge it becomes increasingly difficult to gain any level of expertise in more than one discipline.

**Step Three: Memorization**

First, memorize the list of key words. Then, one by one, say as much as you can about each of them. When you cannot remember as much as you need to, read the corresponding paragraph. Repeat this process until you can repeat what you have learned without hesitation. By the time you are through, the knowledge you have gained should flow from you naturally and easily.