



Obsession of Present World: A Reflection of T S Eliot's *The Waste Land*

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T.S. Eliot, in full Thomas Stearns Eliot, was born on September 26, 1888, in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. He is a versatile personality. His dimensions in literature are, American-English Poet, Playwright, Literary Critic, and Editor, A Leader of the Modernist movement in poetry in such works as *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943). Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American culture from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in diction, style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays, he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones. The publication of *Four Quartets* led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for Literature. Then he died on January 4, 1965, in London, England. He is a prolific writer who vigorously expressed his perception of the world then but unfortunately, now the situation has worsened to the extremity. He is the first writer in English one who vehemently shared the ruining of culture, tradition, customs, and patterns of life. He realizes the ideas and perception of the world abruptly to the world. Through some examples from the literature of the world shattered in his *The Waste Land*. Finally, the researcher is going to express the impact and how far the poem *The Waste Land* reflects present society will be discussed politically, economically, and socially in the research article.

KEYWORDS: Politics, Modern Society, Religion, Economics, and Waste Land

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The title of the first poem in *The Waste Land* is *The Burial of Dead*. The very first line of the poem represents "April is the cruelest month" The sentence is a superlative one, in the very first line T S Eliot has emphasized that modern men and women do not want to work hard even for their daily bread because they are used with idleness, the laziness of being at home for more than six months in a year, doing only household things and spending the cold weather by the warm of the nearness of wife does not leave man to go out of home for work. This kind of activity shows and posturizes the draught of spirituality. Modern men do not visit God even on sabbath days. After the

industrial revolution, men and women have a complete concentration over wealth and accumulation of money for the future generations. Men and women forget to remember God because he receives monetary assistance from his own toil. God is not necessary for human beings because modern society has taught him that those who have knowledge will acquire more money which is necessary to all to fulfill our earthly desires. As a man changes his lifestyle accordingly, nature also has changed. In *The Burial of the Dead* Eliot quotes that “Mixing of desire, Stirring Dull roots with spring rain Winter kept us warm” rain showers are unnatural and not in its season. In the church, one can find a “heap of broken images” that vividly shows us that the churches are unused not even visited by anyone and men stop going to church. Modern men are obsessed with self-oriented not broad-minded. Money plays a crucial role in society, men run after money, and priority is given to earthly pleasures. In the *Game of Chess* two women just they spend their evening in a coffee café and sharing and worrying about their external beauty. One of the women’s husbands is going to return home after five years, therefore the other woman advised her to beautify and mend the teeth which were not properly arranged. In *Death by Water* the youngsters spend their time lavishly in copulation and merry-making. They do not want give priority to our internal beauty, rather they give much preference to external beauty which is not at all required or valued in human life. External beauty may decay at any time whereas internal beauty will exist as long as our soul lingers.

In *The Burial of Death* Madame Sosotris is a famous clairvoyante and wisest woman among Europe. Hence people lost trust in God, started believing fellow human beings who foretells one’s future. These kinds of activities would certainly stress upon the life of modern men’s spiritual draught. In Sosotris’ cards Phoenician Sailor, Belladonna, the lady of Rocks and one-eyed merchant refer that the world is known for business, men run after money and work. Therefore, T S Eliot has stressed upon the hanged man is missing in the cards. Hanged man is none other than the Jesus Christ. So London changed into unreal city because immigrants from all over the world are hailing in the unreal city. After the World War I, London was filled with a lot corpses, no human was ready to vacate all dirt. The city was full of foul. But it was the city once thronged by the people for all kind of business for all walks of life. So after the World War I, the same place turned over completely as a burial ground. Therefore, T.S. Eliot mentioned London became unreal city.

In *Game of Chess*, how a woman decorates her inner beauty and the engraving of chamber and it delineates about how lavishly modern men spend his currency to decorate his room. There are many people who die out of proper food and unhealthy life but modern men are known for accumulation wealth. The chair she uses in the poem *Game of Chess* a burnished throne, glowed on the marble, glass with fruited wine, golden cupidon, sevenbranched candelabra which is supposed to be placed in churches but it is used now in her chamber, this is the marvellous pasteurization of how modern woman lives where others are struggling terribly. Vials of ivory and colored glass, synthetic perfumes, there were the costliest articles used by modern woman in her chamber. The following words would speak of the modern people’s desires,

“My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

What are you thinking off? What thinking? What?

I never know what are you thinking. Think.

I think we are in rats alley

Where the dead men lost their bones”

These lines would focus on the interest of modern men. The woman wants to relax herself from the day responsibilities, so now she feels tired she needs to refresh herself therefore she wants to have sexual intercourse with a man. Here T S Eliot has not mentioned as they are united by their marriage. But they stay together, this is not common in Indian society, where as in western countries the living together life started 100 years or one century ago. T. S. Eliot is the one of the great poets in the word who expresses the personal and sensitive touch of modern people in western countries. And the final line of the stanza talks about they are in the rats alley delineates how the situation of post-World War I. The soldiers who took part in the war some of them died and no place and no one was ready to bury the dead soldiers, out of war fear many people did not even come volunteer themselves. So the corpses were torn and decayed by the sun and birds and animals have consumed the dead as their food then the rest has got foul smell out of the decayed. In the modern society our culture is lost because after the independence, India as well was influenced by the wester cultures. Here culture represents food, dress code, the life style and their pattern of celebrations. In the following lines discuss the typical way of life of the modern society.

“What shall we do tomorrow?

“What shall we ever do?”

The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.”

The present world people lead an uncertainty of life. No plan for the next day or no other great aim to achieve. We lead our lives as of the day goes on. No firm or constant aim or goal for the modern man. The life style of modern man goes such as the above said lines. The very first line starts with the interrogative mark the next line expresses that life is full of boring and, they do not know what they have to do next, the life is full of ennui and idle. So according to the above said lines they wake at 10.00 am for having bath in hot water going for club to play a game of chess this the routine way of life of modern man. And the final line says that they are leading an idle way of life. Yes, it is true that now a days nobody knows what we are doing, what is the purpose of our life. Just we lead our life as of days go on. In the following stanza focuses on how the society leads its life and how and where they spend their precious time. As lines follow,

“Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer night. The nymphs
Are departed.

And their friend, the loitering heirs of City directors”

Here in the very first line nymph refers a mythological spirit of nature imagined as a beautiful maiden inhabiting rivers, woods or other locations that shows us that the presence of God and nature will not be there hereafter. On the river bank empty bottles refer now a day youngster consuming alcohol immensely without any purpose of it. Sandwich papers that couple used to buy as their snack because they are going to spend their time lavishly just merely talking about their private life, they do not discuss on any science or society concern over these ideologies. Cardboard boxes, cigarette ends represent that they are always in a celebration mood, they no more want to think about the moral way of life. Therefore, the nymphs are departed from the earth to somewhere. This stresses upon the sterility and barrenness of modern culture. Each stanza portrays any one of themes expressed above will be dealt with. As exactly the two lines express that ”Winter kept us warm, covering earth in forgetful snow” in the six months in a year they work in the summer alone the rest of the years they do not go out of home at all, therefore the westerners do not want to go for work at all. They wish to have copulation alone. They do not think about future life. Hence modern do not have faith in god. Man has lost his passion, his faith in God as well as religion. This decay of faith has resulted in the loss of vitality both spiritual and emotional. According to T. S. Eliot the life of modern man in the earth is life in death, no spirituality, faith or trust in God as well as human beings. Birth, death and rebirth is the theme of the poem the waste land. The routine life of modern men just to accumulate wealth and money not to seek the presence of God or spirituality. No spiritual thirst modern man has. The following lines are the best embodiment of draught of the land.

“Here is no water but only rock

Rock and no water and the sandy road

The road winding above among the mountains

Which are mountains of rock without water

If there were water we should stop and drink

Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think”

T S Eliot intensely wants to educate the reader of the poem how the nature has started ruining. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge says in his *The Rime of Ancient Mariner* as Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink. That line shows us that the sailor is on the sea and the boat has been ruined so he needs to drink water, but he does not have drinkable water rather he is surrounded by sea water. This poem was written in 17th century but *The Waste Land* (1922) was written in 20th century. After a few centuries there would not be any traces of nature that would prevail

in the world. At the end of the poem *The Waste Land* Though the Wasteland poem talks about Indian rasas. Datta is to give, Dayadavam refers to compassion, and Damyata that refers to renouncing the earthly pleasures in the world.

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