

## Eliot's Approach to Ethical Poetry: *The Waste Land*

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### Abstract

This study aims at showing the ethical approaches in T. S. Eliot's poetry. I argue that Eliot's poetry is loaded with ethical approaches that characterized the era in which he lived. Also, the significance of this study arises from the fact that ethics have become buried in modern life. I, among others, feel we need it urgently these days to survive in a nice manner.

When reading Eliot's *The Waste Land*, we have come with a pessimistic reading of the poem. This reading applies to our life nowadays. Eliot imagines the modern world as a wasteland, a land that has been mixed with ambiguity, aridness, and destruction. This land, according to some critics, gives no indication of purity, which neither the land nor the people could visualize. In *The Waste Land*, various characters are sexually frustrated or dysfunctional, unable to cope with either reproductive or no reproductive sexuality.

**Key words:** Wasteland; Ethics and morality; Love; Sex; Religion

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### INTRODUCTION

In the introduction, the researcher introduces the main terms of my study: ethics and morality. And also, the

researcher will talk about the significance of the study, review of related literature, and the statement of the problem.

Ethics, in general, have been a significant factor all over the world. Also, they are a very significant part of our life, especially during the rise of the Arab spring. They, along with morals, were extensively found in all ethics, and literary pieces. Morals have been highly regarded as a weapon in literature, especially when scholars, critics, and authors wanted to express their own thoughts, ideologies and manners.

According to Valery, ethics is considered

a field of rational, scholarly discourse, the beginnings of ethics are built into our very bodies. They are rooted in moral emotions such as empathy, shame, and guilt. Moral intuition and reasoning emerge similarly in children across cultures, and they are nurtured by adults. We build on these moral emotions and instincts by making agreements with each other, weigh costs and benefits of different courses of action, looking for ethical scholars, and drawing on the wisdom of our ancestors. (p.20)

Furthermore, people, in the past, had problems with ethics and ethical questions. They work to balance the happiness of individuals against the wellbeing of other individuals or the collective, and through the use of moral philosophy and religion to find this balance (Valery, p.20). As a part of ethics, especially for this study, the present researcher is interested in expressing ethical poetry because it is not only part of our life, but also it is needed in our religion.

Ethical poetry and morality are as important as other fictive and literary genres. Many scholars and people defined them differently, although in terms of content these definitions seem to be identical. However, below, I will illustrate some of these definitions.

According to the business dictionary (2012) ethical poetry is defined as:

The basic concept and fundamental [one] of right human conducts. It includes [the] study of universal values such as

essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of land, concern for health and safety and, increasingly, also for the natural environment. While morality is [the] conformance to a recognized code, doctrine, or system of values of what is right and wrong and to behave accordingly. (p.1)

Then it adds:

No system of morality is accepted as universal, and the answers to the question "what is morality?" differ sharply from place to place, group to group, and time to time, for some it means conscious and deliberate effort in guiding one's conduct by reason based on fairness and religious belief. For others it is, in the words of the UK mathematician and philosopher Alfred Norton Whitehead (1861-1947), "... What the majority then and there happen to like, and immorality is what they dislike". (p.2)

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## 1. RATIONALE AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

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I have chosen T.S. Eliot because Eliot is one of the most prominent British poets of the twentieth century and the representative of free verse and modernism in the poetry of the twentieth century. Eliot's poems helped reshape contemporary European literature. Also, in 1948, Eliot obtained the Nobel Prize for literature. For the sake of current study, I will consult one famous poem by Eliot, *The Waste Land* because this poem treated ethical issues extensively. *The Waste Land* created a sensation when issued (1922 A.D.). This poem is seen by some critics as a wonderful work and was described by others as a trick. Although this long poem includes many obscure literary allusions, it has clear direction: ethics. They reflect what Eliot saw in contemporary Europe from bankruptcy in spiritual values (Valery, p.5).

Furthermore, this study aims at showing the ethical approaches in T. S. Eliot's poetry. I argue that Eliot's poetry is loaded with ethical approaches that characterized the era in which he lived. Also, the significance of this study arises from the fact that ethics have become buried in modern life. I, among others, feel we need it urgently these days to survive in a nice manner.

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## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

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When studying the literature that talked about my subject, I found that much literature has talked about ethical poetry and morality in general. But, in this study, I will focus on one main poem by Eliot. This poem is: *The Waste Land*. In this review, I will talk about all the literature that deals with ethics and morality. Also I will review Eliot's poems and research that talked about this poem. Further, I will show all the similarities and differences of my study.

A. N. Dwivedi (1984) wrote a paper titled *T.S. Eliot's THE WASTE LAND* comments that the concluding lines of the poem '*The Waste Land*,' by T.S. Eliot underline the significance of absolute peace. Application of the

inestimable wisdom of cultural tradition; Message on the release of man from his self-created prison; emphasis on the necessity of regulating the human heart to avoid violence (p.51).

J. E. Rivers and William Walker (1978) wrote a paper titled "Eliot's *THE WASTE LAND*, in which they discuss T. S. Eliot's use of allusions to Dante Alighieri's "Inferno" in his poem *The Waste Land*, to reinforce the poem's theme of sexual sterility and lack of proper love in the modern world. They compared Dante's characterization of the crowds which swarmed into Rome in 1300 and Eliot's description of people he sees in London, England (Rivers & Walker, 1978, p.8).

Although my subject talks about very common songs and poems, it is different from what the critics above theorized. For example, J. E. Rivers and William Walker discuss T. S. Eliot's use of allusion to Dante Alighieri's "Inferno" in his poem *The Waste Land*, to reinforce the poem's theme of sexual sterility and lack of proper love in the modern world. But, I focus on ethics and morality in Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*.

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## 3. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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*The Waste Land* embodies other common themes such as modernist literary traditions, including the disjointed nature of time, the role of culture and nationality, and eventually the desire to find universality in a period of political unrest. The poem also, as noted, has a number of recurring themes, most of which are pairs of binary oppositions. When commenting on the structure, themes and language choice in *the Waste Land*, Green mentions that the structure, themes, and language choice in *The Waste Land* are not atypical for literature written in this period, the poem is uniquely complex. With a careful and critical look, the poem provides the modern reader with both a glimpse of the collective psyche following World War I and an aesthetic experience exemplar of the modernist literary traditions (Green, 2009, p.9). Additionally, the most significant theme is ethics and morality, the focus of our study. Many British scholars, authors, and playwrights tackled the issue of ethics and morality. In other words, not only T. S. Eliot talked about this subject. Shakespeare and John Dryden are the example below.

William Shakespeare is an English poet and playwright who wrote the famous 154 Sonnets and numerous highly successful oft quoted dramatic works including the tragedy of *The Prince of Denmark*, Hamlet (North, 2001, p.51):

Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
"For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: My blessing season this in thee!" (p.51)

Notably, Shakespeare here treated social conditions so that he tells us not to borrow, which could lead to a loss of confidence by the same borrower and friends around him, leading to social problems that may arise between the parties. Moreover, such behavior is not religious. John Dryden was an influential English poet; literary critic, translator, and playwright who dominated the literary life of Restoration England to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden. Walter Scott called him "Glorious John". He was made Poet Laureate in 1667 (Winn, 1978, p.512). Another excerpt of Dryden is:

Now you shall see I love you. Not a word  
Of chiding more. By my few hours of life,  
I am so pleased with this brave Roman fate,  
That I would not be Caesar, to outlive you.  
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,  
I shall be shown to all the ethereal crowd,—  
Lo, this is he who died with Antony! (Ibid., p.512).

Notably, John Dryden discusses here emotional problems and the impact of these problems on the lovers by differences in their veins, religion, sex and social positions. Despite the harsh conditions that surround them, but they remain immortal in the hearts.

### 3.1 T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

Overall and as most critics and scholars have noted, T. S. Eliot's style is lengthy and laden with literary devices of one sort or another. Eliot uses his knowledge of literature and the English language expertly to develop poetry with an amazing flow despite its length and use of elevated diction, and his figurative language has a profound effect on the reader no matter its nature or significance (Lozano, p.7).

In general, through my reading of Eliot's poems, I have noticed that his style is not an easy one. Among others, I agree with Lozano who describes Eliot's style as thus:

T. S. Eliot has a definite style which can be easily quantified, despite the difficulty of reading and interpreting his work. His sentences tend to be long and oblique, extending a metaphor or a philosophical reflection over the course of a verse or even more. Given Eliot's predilection for English culture, his use of long descriptive sentences is predictable, though it remains a signature and very special trait of his work. (p.5)

A good example is the opening of *Burnt Norton*. Eliot clarifies some of his stylistic features in the excerpt below.

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present

All time is unredeemable.  
What might have been is an abstraction  
Remaining a perpetual possibility  
Only in a world of speculation.  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present.  
Footfalls echo in the memory  
Down the passage which we did not take  
Towards the door we never opened  
Into the rose-garden. My words echo  
Thus, in your mind. (Lozano, p.5)

Apparently, one can easily observe Eliot's definite style in which most of his sentences seem to be long and oblique. Lozano also adds, Eliot's diction also shows a high level of erudition, and he makes no attempt to lower it to reach a wider audience. He is particularly fond of using phrases and verses quoted from works in languages other than English—many verses in *The Waste Land* are in German, for example, while the opening verses of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* are the original Latin version of verses from Dante's *Inferno* (p.7).

The style of *The Waste Land* grows out of Eliot's interest in exploring the possibilities of dramatic monologue. This interest dates back at least as far as *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (North, p.51). *The Waste Land* is not a single monologue like "Prufrock." Instead, it is made up of a wide variety of voices (sometimes in monologue, dialogue, or with more than two characters speaking) (Ibid.).

The style of the poem overall is marked by the hundreds of allusions and quotations from other texts (classic and obscure; "high-brow" and "low-brow") that Eliot peppered throughout the poem. In addition to the many "high-brow" references and/or quotes from poets like Baudelaire, Shakespeare, Ovid, and Homer, Eliot also included a couple of references to "low-brow" genres (Ibid.).

### 3.2 *The Waste Land*

*The Waste Land* is a highly complex poem organized on the principle of a five part symphony. It opens with a forceful epigraph, which serves as a "leitmotif" to the entire poem. This epigraph introduces the antique prophetess, the Sibyl of Cumae, and her fatal utterance of a death wish. This prediction places the tone for *The Waste Land* as a poem that focuses piercingly on the deadness and utter sterility of modern civilization post-World War I Europe, Eliot felt, was on the verge of total (Sauder, 1997, p.19).

The entire poem is worked in the pattern of a patchwork. The poem presents "a heap of broken images"(Ibid.). However, the poet is careful to ensure that these "broken images" (Ibid.) add up to the sum total of the isolated waste land situation, which is the central symbol of the poem. This *Waste Land* is probable

in different ways—as a physical, natural desert as well as a socio-cultural, intellectual, and moral *waste land* (Ibid.).

Thus and overall, in Part I, there are recurring pictures of a dry, sterile scenery—a “dead land” with barren rocks, dead trees, “stony rubbish,” “dry tubers,” “dull roots” and “roots that clutch” (Ibid., p.12). These images are scattered over the two opening segments of Tiresias’ commentary (Ibid.). Elsewhere, in Parts I, III, and V there is the picture of the “Unreal City” which runs sporadically through the poem. In Part III, the undoing of the Thames Maidens by “the loitering heirs of city directors” is reinforced by the equally sordid pictures of Sweeney patronizing Mrs. Porter’s bawdy-house, or the encounter between the typist and clerk in a seedy London flat. There are several other instances of recurrent imagery that reinforces the structure of *The Waste Land* making it an artistically composite piece (Ibid.).

Ironically, *The Waste Land* is also an imitation of literary quotes and scholarly references. The poem is liberally sprinkled with secular and religious figures drawn from history, literature, the Bible, or the sacred Hindu scriptures. Their solitary purpose is to strengthen either the projection of the waste ground scenario, or to bring in the theme of salvation. These allusions are competently blended into the texture of the poem to provide a not-so-easily-visible creative agreement. Thus far, it is definitely there and an honor to Eliot’s skill in constructing his poem (Ibid., p.10).

Additionally, *The Waste Land* is primarily regarded as a poem that epitomizes the disordered life of both individuals and society in the twentieth century. Thematically, it reflects the disillusionment and despair of the post World War I generation. The World that Eliot portrays in his poem is one in which faith in divinely ordered events and a rationally organized universe has been totally lost. There is sterility and ravage everywhere that has replaced the traditional order and fertility. Thus, the central subject of *The Waste Land* is really a religious one (Ibid.).

The title of *The Waste Land*, according to Spears refers to the myth of *From Ritual to Romance*, in which Weston describes a kingdom where the genitals of the king, known as the Fisher King, have been wounded in some way. This injury, which affects the king’s fertility, also mythically affects the kingdom itself. Weston notes that this ancient myth was the basis for various other quest stories from many cultures, including the Christian quest for the Holy Grail. Eliot says he drew heavily on this myth for his poem, and critics have noted that many of the poem’s references refer to this idea (pp.150-81).

At the beginning of *The Waste Land*, it is noticed that there is a fun-damental difference in Eliot’s use of the vegetation myths. In these myths the appropriate attitude towards the renewal of life, or spring, is one rejoicing (Williamson, p.125).

In Williamson’s words, *The Waste Land* was nearly twice as long but Ezra Pound reduced it to its current shape. This explains why the special point of the dedication was for “Ezra Pound.” (Ibid., p.119) According to C.B Cox, *The Waste land* was first published, in the first issues of the *Criterion* (October 1922) and reprinted in the *Dial* in November of the same years, it appeared without footnotes. In his excellent account of the publishing history of the poem, D. H Wood word, recounts how Gelbret Seldes, the managing editor of the *Dial*, has eloquently promoted the poem’s American success, including his efforts about the commissioning of Edmund Wilson to write a review. Wilson praises the poem as a mirror of post-war society, with a new music, even in its borrowings, although he recognizes in Eliot peculiar conflicts of the puritan turned artist. Also, Seldes himself heaps eulogies on the poem in a review in the *Nation*, but it is interesting to note how little he understood the poem. He quotes Bertrand Russell, saying that since the renaissance the clock of Europe has been running down, thus pointing to a reason for the poem’s becoming so influential in the 1920s (Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968, pp.12-13).

It seemed that *The Waste Land* epitomizes the intellectual’s feelings that Eliot was living in a busted and rotten civilization. Another significant review was Conrad Aiken’s in the *New Republic* who recalled the salad days in which he befriended Eliot for fifteen years. Expressing his perspective about *The Waste Land*, Aiken states, *The Waste Land* is “brilliant and kaleidoscopic confusion” (Ibid., pp.12-13), but this “heap of broken images” is justified ‘as a series of brilliant, brief, unrelated or dimly related pictures by which a consciousness empties itself of its characteristic contents’. For him, then, its ‘incoherence is virtue because its *donnée* is incoherent (Ibid.).

According to Aiken, *The Waste Land* is commonly regarded as one of the seminal works of modernist literature. When many critics view firstly, the poem seems too modern. In the place of a traditional work, with unifying themes and a coherent structure, Eliot had produced a poem that seemed to incorporate many unrelated, little-known references to history, religion, mythology, and other disciplines. He even wrote parts of the poem in foreign languages, such as Hindi. In fact the poem was so complex that Eliot felt the need to include extensive notes identifying the sources to which he was alluding, a highly unusual move for a poet, and a move that caused some critics to assert that Eliot was trying to be deliberately obscure or was playing a joke on them (Aiken, 1966, pp.294-95).

In my own observation, most critics showed great focus on Eliot’s disillusionment, especially in the post of World War I in Europe. In other words, they talked about the moral and ethical decay of World War I. In addressing Eliot’s disillusionment, a report conducted by Spears states:



In the work, this sense of disillusionment manifests itself symbolically through a type of Holy Grail legend. Eliot cited two books from which he drew to create the poem's symbolism: Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) and Sir James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1890). The 1922 version of *The Waste Land* was also significantly influenced by Eliot's first wife Vivien and by his friend Ezra Pound, who helped Eliot edit the original 800-line draft down to the published 433 lines. (pp.150-81)

Obviously, Eliot did not feel that violence had been the essential form of the poem. Hence this poem existed with the same sanction; it does not pose a different order of problems. Only the publication of the original could dispute Eliot's judgment (Williamson, p.120).

For Leavis, *The Waste Land* accurately reflects the breakdown of tradition in contemporary civilization:

In considering our present plight we have also to take account of the incessant rapid change that characterizes the Machine Age. The result is breach of continuity and the uprooting of life. This last metaphor has a peculiar aptness, for what we are witnessing today is the final uprooting of the immemorial ways of life, of life rooted in the soil. (Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968, p.14)

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#### 4. DISCUSSION

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In our discussion, the researcher will use two sections that in depth talked about ethics and morals. The first section talks about religion, and the second one addresses a mix of sex and love.

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#### 5. INDICATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS IN *THE WASTE LAND*: LOVE, RELIGION AND SEX

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It is known that, among all other literary schools, religion has been important part of controversy and debate. Critics and scholars avoid using religion but in church and in their own rituals. Therefore, they sometimes criticise literary traditions that talk about religion. Also, the symbols of religion appeared as a sign of modernism, which came as a response to the terrors of World War I in the period from 1910-20. To explain, modernism consisted of a number of amazing and new writing techniques that captured the minds of readers throughout history. The style has become fully abnormal. The literature from this time uses fragmentation, religion, myth, alienation, sex in their writing to capture an audience that understood the turmoil and chaos represented in their writings. Such immoral and extraordinary styles have placed the authors who wrote the material and the people who lived under harsh criticism. A large portion of this writing included religious allusions as is the case in *The Waste Land*. Many modernist writers incorporated religion into their poetry and other writings, using it as a vital part of some sort of message being carried out through the literature. Religion

became an integral part of modernism, cropping up in various writings by famous authors such as T. S. Eliot in "*The Waste Land*" (Woodland, 2010, pp.17-18). Watkins, however, argues that:

After Eliot turned to Anglo-Catholicism [...] in 1928, his poetic power began to wane. Because the subject of his later poetry treats a great and noble religious faith, a believer wishes to regard it as great and noble poetry. And presumably genuine Waste Landers [...] would like to find in the later poetry not only art but also the end of the search for grounds for belief (Watkins, p.53).

In other words, religion in *The Waste Land* is taken from many different perspectives. Readers can notice that there are many elements, images, indications and symbols which are taken from Christianity, Hinduism which can be seen extensively. Also, there are many elements which have a religious reference from the holy Koran and from the other sacred books. Eliot proficiently pulls these religions together in his poem to get points across. This is what makes his poem a masterpiece, in fact. Eliot is cited as being Christian, but references to Hindu holy books called the Upanishads seems to be the most emphasized element of religion in *The Waste Land*. This mixture of religions is part of what makes Eliot's poetry so famous. His integration of religion into his poetry is legendary and is facilitated by Ezra Pounds editing of Eliot's poetry and by Eliot's devotion to poetry (Sauder, 1997, p.9).

Religion in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* shows up mainly in the section "What the Thunder Said," the last section of the poem. Eliot's tremendous knowledge of mythology, religion, and ritual, academic works and key books in the literary tradition informs every aspect of his poetry. He filled his poems with references to both the obscure and the well known, thereby teaching his readers as he writes. In his notes to *The Waste Land*, Eliot explains the crucial role played by religious symbols and myths. He drew heavily from ancient fertility rituals, in which the fertility of the land was linked to the health of the Fisher King, a wounded figure who could be healed through the sacrifice of an effigy. The Fisher King is, in turn, linked to the Holy Grail legends, in which a knight quests to find the grail, the only object capable of healing the land (Ibid.).

The following excerpts are taken from the last section of *The Waste Land*:

After the torch-light red on sweaty faces  
After the frosty silence in the gardens  
After the agony in stony places  
The shouting and the crying  
Prison and place and reverberation  
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains  
He who was living is now dead  
We who were living are now dying  
With a little patience

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  
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit  
There is not even silence in the mountains  
But dry sterile thunder without rain  
There is not even solitude in the mountains  
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl  
From doors of mudcracked houses. (p.64)

Eliot imagines the modern world as a wasteland, a land that has been mixed with ambiguity, aridness, and destruction. This land, according to some critics, gives no indication of purity, which neither the land nor the people could visualize. In *The Waste Land*, various characters are sexually frustrated or dysfunctional, unable to cope with either reproductive or no reproductive sexuality: The Fisher King represents damaged sexuality (according to myth, his impotence causes the land to wither and dry up), Tiresias represents confused or ambiguous sexuality, and the women chattering in "A Game of Chess" represent an out-of-control sexuality. World War I not only eradicated a complete generation of young men in Europe but also ruined the land. Trench warfare and chemical weapons. In *The Hollow Men*, the speaker discusses the dead land, now filled with stone and cacti. Corpses salute the stars with their upraised hands, stiffened from rigor mortis. Trying to process the destruction has caused the speaker's mind to become infertile: his head has been filled with straw, and he is now unable to think properly, to perceive accurately, or to conceive of images or thoughts (Reaza, 2010, pp.25-28).

To illustrate an example, one phrase is repeated over and over, "DA". The phrase comes from Hindu holy books called *Upanishads*, which includes a particular story which talks about gods, daemons, and humans who ask Brahman, the highest deity, what the most important lesson for them to understand is. While Brahman says to each of them the same thing, "DA," each hears something different. Daemons hear "compassion," humans hear "give," and gods hear "self-restraint." T. S. Eliot uses this as a commentary on the human race as a whole. However, although he uses the *Upanishads*, he doesn't use them in exactly the way that they were written. In other words, it is almost as if he does not use them as allusion, it is as if Eliot is writing his own *Upanishad*, modeled off of the one that he notes in the poem, but not quite the same. However, the other part of the poem deals with death and the "waste land," this section seems to end on a high note, relishing freedom and peace. The poem ends with, "*shantih shantih*

*shantih*," which is loosely translated to, "the peace which passeth understanding," and also ends the Hindu *Upanishads* (Woodland, 2010, p.2).

Another example related to the religious indications that can be found in *The Waste Land* is what Eliot scrutinizes in the following excerpt:

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  
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit  
There is not even silence in the mountains. (p.51)

In this excerpt, readers especially those who belong to our Islamic culture may feel the reference to the holy Koran. This story refers to quranic miracles in which prophets were equipped with. The reference to the mountains and rocks is significant. Here, we infer that Eliot has referred to some elements taken from nature in which readers notice something like a miracle. In the quran, water has been generated from the rocks and therefore impressed all the audience, of whom some people converted and others sought more logic. Eliot's reference was significant because he indicates people's separation from nature. Also, it might reflect upon the disillusionment he, among others, lived.

T. S. Eliot, on the other hand, chooses to use a religion that is practiced by approximately fourteen percent of the world's population. This is a good example of how T.S. Eliot writes poetry. Some would say that "Eliot believes that the primary value of religion, for mankind, lies 'in the quality of its worldliness'" (quoted in Gale, n.p). His allusions are to things that people would not understand as much as they would if he alluded to Christianity the whole time. Be that as it may, as this source states, "Eliot's tremendous knowledge of myth, religious ritual, academic works, and key books in the literary tradition informs every aspect of his poetry (Woodland, 2010, p.2).

Using Hinduism, for example, brings a lot to T. S. Eliot's writing that is new and some elements that can be seen in other parts of his writing. One thing that returns in much of his writing is the use of foreign languages. Throughout *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot uses French, German, Italian, Greek, and Hindu. The reason T.S. Eliot uses these languages can be pinned down for most of the languages in the poem, but for Hindu, there is a different explanation. French, German, Italian, and Greek are European languages that T. S. Eliot probably used because they are classical languages (Ibid.).

In Carol H. Smith's words:

Just as a religious interpretation of existence was needed to order the world of nature and of man, so art, [Eliot] felt, required a form which could impose order and meaning on experience. The form which Eliot came to see as the most perfectly ordered and most complete as a microcosmic creation of experience was drama. (Demant, 1935, p.83)

Correlating the previous discussion of religion, *The Waste Land* is Eliot's shout to European society. This reading is meant to take a look at what they have done to the things in life that are supposed to be stunning and creative. Quoting the Upanishads, Eliot implores us to give: "Datta". We must give even at "the awful daring of a moment's surrender which an age of prudence can never retract" (Hart, 2010, p.10).

That all said about the religious implications that exist in the *The Waste Land*, it is Eliot's *The Waste Land* which is related to all aspects of miserable life. He pointed his remarks to his audience in an attempt to instill in them the notion that anything can not or will not produce is a wasteland. This has been very evident with the religious references taken from all regions. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot gives many examples in which he shows how love has been abused and been moved according to people's desires and emotions, rather than their feelings. He offers us an image of the many ways in which sex is abused or misused and points out that these unsacred representations and images of sex are indicative of *The Waste Land*.

In the opening lines, Eliot indicates that something is meant to be energetic and lively. Such image (dynamic) has become "dead land" i.e., a wasteland (Ibid.). Clearly, one can feel these remarks by taking a look at the following lines taken from the introduction of the poem. These lines read as thus:

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the hogan, garden,  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour. (p.51)

Notably, Eliot's reference to Lilacs when they are breeding is a very sexual indication and in the meantime it is considered a reference to the aridness of human emotions in *The Waste Land*. Placing this notion at the beginning of the poem stands for Eliot's dissatisfaction with the natural phenomena created and damage by man. Such natural destruction has been created by humans, thus creating an emotional loss. Also, this trend has resulted eventually with man's emotional damage: emotions have become mechanized and artificial.

Human's effects have been very evident in that they have been "mixing memory and desire [the] stirring dull roots with spring rain. This resulted in confusing the spiritual and emotional sex with the physical and carnal roles of sex. Eliot invites us to watch humanity tragically transform the beautiful, sacred, distinguishing, creative ceremony of love-making into a clattering, mindless, loveless machine, churning out loss of innocence, exploitation, and murder (Ibid.).

By contrast, sex is out of place when mutual love and respect between a man and a woman are not involved. Sex is highly based on instincts. In other words, it has become a sign of lacking morality or "reproduction". Eliot apparently is saying that the infertility that has been evident in nature has reflected upon man's relation to his wife and eventually resulted in the lack of reproductively. To explain more, Hart has commented on this same notion:

There is no intention of reproduction; there is no purpose other than the satisfaction of animal desires. What we need is sex that produces life; that rejuvenates and restores, that is not sterile. In the second part of the piece, A Game of Chess, Lil is trapped in a marriage in which her husband does not really love her. This is the distinction we as humans often fail to make in our encounters with people we "love". We often fail to see the difference between the physical and emotional aspects of sex and/or love. Lil's husband, for example, desires sex only to satisfy his body, not his heart and mind. Lil's friend warns her that she'd better fix her teeth, because if she fails to do so, her husband will no longer have any desire for her, because he equates the physical with sex and sex with love. (p.2)

So, essentially, as most critics have found, love is physical for Eliot rather than emotional and dynamic process of production and fertility. While Sex depends upon physical appearances, love and fidelity are dependent upon sex. Further, Lil's friend advises her that if she "doesn't give it him, there's others will". She has said that any woman will do, and that any woman, including herself, would be willing to take her place. When Lil states her recent abortion her friend inquires of her, "What you get married for if you don't want children?" (p.164). This may be the only reasonable thing her friend says in this exchange, but she does have a point. Why engage in a sacred act meant for reproduction and a demonstration of love when reproduction is not the goal and love is absent? Loveless, lifeless, murderous sex, "bats with baby faces" (Hart, 2010, p.2).

This, previous discussion, in fact is a harsh criticism for the period in which the poem is written. Eliot censures the period and its people because they celebrated sex for its physical needs rather than its moral and spiritual aspects of it. The next section of our discussion is the third part of *The Waste Land*. The typist readies her house for a young male guest in the third part of *The Waste Land* (The Fire Sermon).

The following excerpts are taken from the third section of *The Waste Land*:



Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;  
 Exploring hands encounter no defence;  
 His vanity requires no response,  
 And makes a welcome of indifference.  
 (And I Tiresias have foresuffered all  
 Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
 I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
 And walked among the lowest of the dead.)  
 Bestows one final patronising kiss,  
 And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit...  
 She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
 Hardly aware of her departed lover;  
 Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:  
 "Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."  
 When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
 Paces about her room again, alone,  
 She smooths her hair with automatic hand,  
 And puts a record on the gramophone. (p.51)

Throughout the previous excerpt, the girl is not interested in creating a sexual relationship with the man. She is "glad it's over" when the chore is done. The man, though unpleasant, haughty, and belligerent, has been winning, or at least, he appears to have been triumphant. The typist is expected only to sleep with him for rank, money, or supremacy. Whether or not he is aware of this, he "assaults at once" in his quest of sexual delight, and she does not decline his advances. He desires only what she can offer him sexually, and she desires only what prizes he can present her. Neither loves the other. They are only a clatter, mindless, loveless machine, churning out loss of innocence, utilization, and assassinate (Hart, 2010, p.4).

Another loves- related theme is the theme of sexual corruption. Eliot stresses this phenomenon by illustrating many examples. The first is found in the description of the lady of situations. A "sylvan scene" is displayed above her mantel. The scene depicts the change of Philomel, who was raped by King Tereus, husband of her sister Procne. Eliot states in line 102, "And still she cried, and still the world pursues." The change of Philomela took place a long time ago, yet, it is still happening today (Williamson, p.142). A second illustration of corrupted sex is in the pub scene (pp.140-172). The pub scene reads the following:

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said-  
 I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,  
 HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME  
 Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.  
 He'll want to know what you done with that money he  
 gave you.  
 To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.  
 You have them out, Lil, and get a nice set,  
 He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.  
 And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He's been in the army four years, he wants a good  
 time,  
 And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.  
 Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said. (p.51)

Albert "wants a good time" and he doesn't care who he hurts to get it. He is not worried about the option of his wife dying in childbirth. The feelings of the culture i.e. lust, should be satisfied regardless of the means adopted (quoted in Spears, pp.17-18). This theme is seen once more in the meeting of the typist and the young man. The typist is "bored and tired." The young man is "flushed and decided." Eliot states, "His vanity requires no response, and makes a welcome of lack of interest." He isn't interested in stimulating her; he is only interested in his own satisfaction. "Love" in modern society is not in truth love—it is merely the fulfillment of instinctive desires. It is practical, boring, and empty (quoted in Matthiessen, p.61). The references to Tristan and Isolde in *The Burial of the Dead*, to Cleopatra in *A Game of Chess*, and to the story of Tereus and Philomela advise that love, in *The Waste Land*, is often destructive. Tristan and Cleopatra die, while Tereus rapes Philomela, and even the love for the hyacinth girl leads the poet to see and know "nothing" (Gradesaver, n.p.).

These three scenes are fairly prolonged, but Eliot also shows the corruption of love in short references. For example, lines 196-198 state "But at my back from time to time I hear / The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring / Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring." The first line as Brooks explains "To His Coy Mistress." The other two lines refer to Day's "Parliament of Bees." In short, Love was once treasured, but it is now reduced to sex for pleasure and not much else. In addition, Eliot contrasts the love of Elizabeth and Leicester with lovers of the present day (represented by the Thames daughters). The love of the past was enduring and real, while the love of the modern world is transitory and phony (Simpson, 2007, p.11).

Notably, Eliot is very discouraged about the society he has described as a waste land, but he does offer hope and a means of recovery. In Part V "What the Thunder Said," the three interpretations of DA - Datta (give), Dayadhvam (sympathize) and Damayata (control)—are the keys to new life for the waste land. They are the antithesis of modern problems. If people learn to give, sex will gain new meaning as an expression of emotion and it will no longer be corrupted. If they sympathize with each other, they will be able to communicate their true feelings and listen to those of others. Finally, if they develop self-control, their faith will return and they will no longer fear life or death (Ibid.).

Three other references to sexuality underline this conclusion. The first is the reference to Mr Eugenides who invites the speaker to spend the weekend with him at the "Metropole". The speaker himself makes



no comment on this invitation though Alasdair Macrae suggests that in this passage “London, representative of urban living, is corrupt and has lost its spiritual vision”. In the second example, a chat between two women reaches the conclusion that (sexual) magnetism may be reduced to a set of false teeth. Now Albert is coming back from the war, Lil is told:

He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have to have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.

And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He's been in the army for four years, he wants a good time

And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said. (Gardner, 1972, p.3).

These lines are a reminder that men were in short supply after the First World War; they underline how many were killed. Moreover, they help to reinforce the extent to which rigid Victorian sexual mores have broken down in the consequences of the war to end wars (Ibid.).

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## CONCLUSION

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After we have finished showing different readings and interpretation of Eliot's *The Waste Land* it is important to show the following conclusions that we came with. These conclusions have been derived from our discussion of issues related to love, sex and religion. Right after these conclusions, we will recommend some of the remarks for this study.

Some conclusions, we should add, apply to this poem whereas others only apply to their poem. Most of Eliot's poetry is full of indications, clear and obscure, about religion and religious symbols. These were all taken from different religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Paganism. Most of the two poems have didactic sense: Eliot tries to teach and instruct as he writes poetry.

There are some indirect references to our religion, Islam. readers especially those who belong to our Islamic culture may feel the reference to the holy Koran. This story refers to quranic miracles in which prophets were equipped with. The reference to the mountains and rocks is significant. In his *The Waste Land*, Eliot deals with his audience to instill in them the notion that everything in this world, and even the previous world, which is not productive is a wasteland. Eliot gives many examples in which he shows how love has been abused and been moved according to people's desires and emotions, rather than their feelings. He offers us an image of the many ways in which sex is abused or misused and points out that these unsacred representations and images of sex are indicative of *The Waste Land*.

This once again emphasizes Eliot's notion that we often fail to see the difference between the physical and emotional aspects of sex and/or love. Eliot shows a harsh criticism for the period in which the poem is written. Eliot censures the period and its people because they celebrated sex for its physical needs rather than its moral and spiritual aspects of it. The next section in our discussion is the third part of *The Waste Land*. The typist readies her house for a young male guest in the third part of *The Waste Land* (The Fire Sermon).

Notably, Eliot is very discouraged about the society he has described as a waste land, but he does offer hope and a means of recovery. Eliot uses a dramatic structure in this poem, thus standing for the conflicts that exist in life.

*The Waste Land* is Eliot's shout to European society. This reading is meant to take a look at what they have done to the things in life that are supposed to be stunning and creative. Quoting the Upanishads, Eliot implores us to give: “Datta”. We must give even to “the awful daring of a moment's surrender which an age of prudence can never be retract.”

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