

Poetry
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T. S. Eliot - 1

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Thomas Stearns Eliot
(1888-1965)

- Historical and Literary Context
- T S Eliot
- Eliot's Poetic Theory
- *The Waste Land*: Publication
- *The Waste Land*: Structure
- Selected Passages from I and II
- Analysis



Hello. Today, we are going to look at one of the most important poets of the 20th Century, Thomas Stearns Eliot. He was born in 1888 and died in 1965. We will first see the historical and literary context briefly and then look into the life of T S Eliot as it has a bearing on his poetry. Then, spend some time briefly on his own concept of poetry, poet and poetic theory and all that.

Then, we will see the publication history of this poem, 'The Waste Land' and then, the Structure. Finally, we will read some passages from section 1 and section 2 of this Waste Land. And then, give an analysis of this poem and then continue with the third, fourth and fifth sections in the next lecture.

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Historical and Literary Context



- Transition to the new century
- First World War (1914-1918)
- Second World War (1939-1945)
- Inexplicable and avoidable massive deaths and destructions
- Migration of poets and writers to Europe
- Emergence of modernist poetry
- Dominance of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound
- Influence of continental art movements like symbolism, futurism, cubism, surrealism, etc., on modern poetry
- The question of meaning and values for humanity in personal and social lives



Here is a Historical and Literary context. Of course, it was a transition to the new century in which Eliot was born. He saw the First World War and the Second World War with his own eyes. But the experience of the First World War is the one that has a bearing on his poems so much. What he noticed was inexplicable and avoidable massive deaths and destructions.

It was no man's understanding. How could so many people die at the same time? And also, we find another phenomenon at this time that is, many poets from US migrated to Europe, particularly, Paris and London. We also have this emergence of modernist poetry at this time with 3 poets, dominant poets like Yeats, Eliot and Pound.

At this time, we noticed an influence of continental art movements like symbolism, futurism, cubism, surrealism and so on, on modern poetry. These are various art movements which attempted to capture reality very closely, carefully. All of them face the same question of meaning and values for humanity in personal and social lives. What was man? What was human being? What was the meaning?

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T S Eliot (1888-1965)

- One of the most influential poet-critics of the 20th century
- Exposed to Unitarian and Catholic Church practices
- Well-versed in both Western and Eastern thought
- Influenced by Symbolism and Laforgue at an early age
- Friends with Conrad Aiken, Jean Verdenal, and Pound
- Traumatized by his failed marriage with Vivienne
- Joined the Anglican Church and settled in the UK
- Suffered a mental breakdown in 1921 and wrote parts of *The Waste Land* while recovering in Switzerland



As we said earlier, TS Eliot is one of the most influential poet-critics of the 20th century. He was a learned man like Milton that is why he was able to write so much about poetry and poets throughout his life. He was exposed to Unitarian and Catholic Church practices from his childhood, he was well-versed in both, Western and Eastern thought, not only literature, philosophy as well. He was influenced by Symbolism specifically by Laforgue at an early age.

He was friends with Conrad Aiken in his Harvard days, where he studied and then, he became friends with Jean Verdenal in France and of course, with Pound in England. Eliot was traumatized by his failed marriage with his first wife Vivienne Haigh-wood. As a result, he joined Anglican Church and settled in the UK for whole of his life. Because of his personal problems, he suffered a mental breakdown in 1921, and wrote parts of the Waste Land while recovering in Switzerland. This poem is a significant poem for 20th century.

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Eliot's Poetic Theory



- Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919)
- **Tradition** was important for Eliot.
- The poet should have a sense of the past and reflect the whole of European culture in his work.
- **Objectivity** in art was also equally significant for Eliot.
- Unlike Wordsworth, Eliot posited an impersonal theory.
- The poet is like **a catalyst** or a medium, as he does not get involved in the poetic process personally.
- "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality."
- However, critics have discerned Eliot's personality in his poems, especially in *The Waste Land*.



Let us see the poetic theory of TS Eliot as he has enunciated in his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent" published in 1919 which has had a tremendous influence on the writing and reading practices in literature. Tradition was very important for Eliot; equally objectivity was also important for him. He said that the poet should have a sense of the past and reflect the whole of European culture in his work.

Similarly, he said that, the poet should be objective, he should not be like Wordsworth, expressing his own life, on the other hand, Eliot wanted poets to keep themselves away from the poem. He used his image of a catalyst, so, he said a poet is like a catalyst or a medium as he does not get involved in the poetic process personally. That is why he offered this impersonal theory of poetry. To quote Eliot from this essay, "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." Readers after him have found that this theory was kind of mask used by him to express himself in different ways, that is why critics have discerned Eliot's own personality in his poems, especially, in the Waste Land.

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Partners: Vivienne and Valerie



We have the pictures of Eliot with his first wife, Vivienne and then, his second wife, Valerie, in the second picture, the larger picture. The small picture is with Vivienne and the larger picture is with Valerie. He was unhappy in the first marriage, whereas, in the second marriage, he was very happy. We can see the joy of Eliot and Valerie in the second picture.

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The Waste Land (1922, 1923)



The Waste Land: Context

- Composition 1910-1922, during the 1921 rest cure
- A collection of fragments, “a heap of broken images”
- Ruthlessly edited by Pound and so dedicated to him
- Best collaboration between Eliot & Pound in publishing
- Published in *The Criterion* in the UK and *The Dial* in the US
- Unseen poem awarded The Dial Prize (\$2000) publication fee (\$150), royalty from book (580.28) and Hogarth (£20) **Total - \$ 2800** (Lawrence Rainey, “The Price of Modernism,” 1989)
- Marketing & commoditization of culture in modernist age
- Unknown writer – international fame



These pictures are the cover pages of the first editions as published in United States and UK. Let us understand the context in which the Waste Land was written and also published. This was composed during a long period of time from 1910 to 1922 actually. Most of the parts of the poem were composed during the 1921 rest cure in Switzerland. This is a collection of fragments that is why it is called “a heap of broken images.” All kinds of images have been put together. This was ruthlessly edited by Pound and so, as gratitude, as a mark of gratitude, Eliot dedicated this poem to Pound. This publication shows the best collaboration between Eliot and Pound in publishing. This was published in *The Criterion* in the UK and *The Dial* in the US.

These are the two important journals of those times. How can we imagine that a poem could get an award of 2000 Dollars in 1922 without being seen? That is what really happened. The *Dial* magazine in the US awarded him 2000 Dollars before publication and also later, after publication, they gave him 150 Dollars and from the book published in UK and US, he was able to get 580 Dollars and then he got some royalty from Hogarth Press as 20 Pounds and in all together, we have 2800 Dollars for TS Eliot out of this publication.

There is a critique called Lawrence Rainey who has studied the economic implications of the publications of the Waste Land in the US and UK, considering the marketing commoditization of culture in modernist age. This is something very special because Eliot was not a very well-known writer at the time. This is how an unknown writer Eliot became an international celebrity in a short time.

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Preliminary

- **Length:** 433 lines in five unequal sections
- **Original Title:** “He do the police in different voices”
(from *Conrad's Heart of Darkness*)
- **Title:** *The Waste Land*
- **Original Epigraph:** “The horror! The horror!” from
Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but dissuaded by Pound
- **Epigraph:** the death wish of the Cumaean Sybil from
Petronius's *Satyricon*: “I want to die”
- **Original Author:** T S Eliot
- **Authors:** Eliot and Pound; extensive editing of the draft
- **Dedication:** to Ezra Pound, the better craftsman



Some more preliminary details about the poem let us learn here. The total length of the poem is 433 lines in 5 unequal sections. The original title as selected by Eliot was this, “He do the police in different voices,” actually, this is quotation from Joseph Conrad’s famous novel, *Heart of Darkness*. And the title now, as it appears is *The Waste Land*.

Similarly, he also chose an epigraph from the same novel, *Heart of Darkness*. “The horror! The horror!” expressing the horror of humanity by Conrad in his novel, but then, Pound did not accept this, so, he dissuaded Eliot from using this. He told him to use something more valuable, that is why, then, Eliot chose this current epigraph we have in the poem.

This epigraph deals with the death wish of the Cumaean Sybil from Petronius’s book *Satyricon*. The meaning of which is “I want to die.” The original author is of course, TS Eliot, but it was collaborated with Pound and so we have these collaborative authors between Eliot and Pound. Pound extensively edited this draft of more than 1000 lines into 433 lines. Not surprisingly, Eliot has dedicated this book to Ezra Pound and he calls Pound, ‘the better craftsman.’

have some passages for just discussion and understanding. Let us read the first passage from the first section 'The Burial of the Dead.'

"April is the cruellest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with the spring rain.

Winter kept us warm, Covering 5

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 Hofgarten, 10

And drank coffee, and talked for an hour."

We have underlined, we have highlighted certain words in colour like April is the cruellest month, referring to the allusion to Chaucer's The Prologue, where Chaucer glorifies April. Here, in contrast, Eliot is revising the understanding of Spring and April month.

We also have 3 seasons: April, winter and summer. That is why we have highlighted elements, seasons, human beings, the cycle of life, all are brought together in this poem and then we have identified this 'as' and 'we,' several kinds of pronouns will be used in this poem and the underlining of breeding, mixing, stirring, spring and all that will draw our attention to how the first line, we have the reduction in line length. Breeding, mixing, stirring, spring. Of course, rain is there, even if you remove that rain, you can see some kind of rhyme you can see, some kind of rhythm you can see and this rhyme and rhythm is

reduction in meaning. Reduction in understanding life. Reduction in the kind of human life that we have come to in 20th century.

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I. The Burial of the Dead - 2
What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, 20
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock, 25
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust. 30



Second passage,

“What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow

Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, 20

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,

And the dry stone no sound of water. Only

There is shadow under this red rock, 25

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock,)

And I will show you something different from either

Your shadow at morning striding behind you



Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;

This passage focuses on this show of shadow or shadow of show with a heap of broken images in the religious context of the Son of Man, that is Christ and these rhetorical questions, what are the roots that clutch? What branches grow out of this stony rubbish? Nothing grows here. Nothing is renewable here, then, what is this life that is death?

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I. The Burial of the Dead - 3

Unreal City, 60
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet. 65
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying:
“Stetson! 69
“You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!”



We need to understand that the Waste Land is here, city-based poem. Modernist poets really focused on city life, unlike romantic poets who focused on rural life. So, here we have city, but this city is identified by Eliot and many other poets as unreal city.

“Unreal city, 60

Under the brown frog of winter dawn,

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,

I had not thought death had undone so many.

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,

And each man fixed his eyes before his feet. 65

Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,

To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours

With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying:

“Stenson...

69

“You, hypocrite lecteur! - mon semblable, - mon frère!”

This means- you hypocrite readers, my likeness, my brother. This is the kind of foreign language expression that Eliot has used often throughout the poem causing difficulty for the reader.

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II. A Game of Chess - 1

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out 80
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of seven-branched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion; 85
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours;



Now, we move on to the second section. A Game of Chess. This game of chess has a symbolic meaning of this play of the game of life. How disruptively we play with each other, here, is one drama in the history of mankind. The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne, with an allusion to Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra.

“The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,

Glowed on the marble, where the glass

Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines

From which a golden Cupidon peeped out. 80

(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)

Doubled the flames of seven-branched candelabra

Reflecting light upon the table as

The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,

From satin cases poured in rich profusion; 85

In vials of ivory and coloured glass,

Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,

Unguent, powdered, or liquid- troubled, confused

And drowned the sense in odours;”

Cleopatra is evoked in this poem to indicate the kind of contrast we have with modern life, modern life does not have so much of meaning as Cleopatra could have, even when she was trying to live her life, when she knew her imminent death, problem of life that she was facing because she joined Antony and opposed Caesar. She was meaningful or she found meaning in her life.

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II. A Game of Chess - 2

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

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

“What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

“I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

I think we are in rats' alley

Where the dead men lost their bones.

“What is that noise?”

The wind under the door.

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”

Nothing again nothing.

“Do

“You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

Nothing?”



Now, the Game of Chess continues. We have a contemporary situation now.

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

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

What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

A voice replies,

I think we are in rats’ alley,

Where the deal men lost their bones.

Then, another voice-

“What is that noise?”

the wind under the door.

What is the noise now? What is the wind doing?

Nothing again nothing. Do

You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

Nothing?”

This is the kind of life we have in 20th century, early 20th century. Probably, we have it now as well. Nothing echoing the great nothing in Shakespeare’s King Lear ‘Nothing can come out of nothing.’

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II. A Game of Chess - 3

The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.

You are a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don't want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

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Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good



Next section from A Game of Chess we have here. Another context, a pub, where people come and have their drinks and then it is time to leave and so we have many voices mixed up in this passage.

“The chemist said it would be alright, but I’ve never been the same

You are a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert would not leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you do not want children?

HURRY UP, PLEASE ITS TIME.

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot-

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME.

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

Ta ta. Goonight Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.”

This modern context of taking leave from the pub as the bartender is announcing, ‘hurry up please, it is time, leave the hall. Leave the bar. And we have 2 ladies speaking to each other about their marital problems. About, of course, husband and wife relationship. Albert is there and his wife is there and another lady is asking, ‘what you get married for, if you do not want children?’ That is the biggest question that we have in this poem. The Waste Land is Waste Land because it does not produce any offspring, in human life or in natural life.

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Thematic Contrast

- Waste Land and Fertile Land
- Death and Life
- Cruelty and Compassion
- Wisdom and Ignorance
- Broken and Whole
- Fear and Hope; Nervous and Relaxed
- Unreal and Real
- Hypocrisy and Integrity
- Past and Present
- Dark and Light
- Forget and Remember
- Men and Women
- Betrayal and Loyalty



After looking at all these passages, we have identified this kind of thematic contrast from the title to the lines that we saw at the end. The Waste Land immediately recalls a fertile land opposite to it. Then we have this death, with burial of the dead, so we have death and also life, cruelty and compassion, wisdom and ignorance, broken fragments and then whole object or whole subject. Then we have fear and hope as in the case of this husband and wife, the nervous wife and the relaxed husband.

We have unreal city and also real life or unreal life, we have hypocrisy and integrity. Past and present, dark and light, forget and remember, men and women, betrayal and loyalty. We saw Albert, if he would not find happiness in his wife, he would go to somebody else. So, this kind of betrayal in human relations; in personal life, in political life, in the whole of human life. That is why, this poem is very powerful.

We have not mentioned some of the other passages in this, particularly, we must mention this Madame Sosostris passage, where she has a pack of cards to inform the people about their future, she is a fortune teller and she plays games with people's lives. So, we have hypocrisy and integrity, we will have one line from this a little later.

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Poetic Devices

Symbol: The Waste Land for people and civilization (title)
Allusion: "April is the cruellest month, breeding" (1)
Transferred Epithet: dull roots (4), forgetful snow (6)
Rhetorical Question:
What are the roots that clutch? What branches grow?
(19)
Alliteration and Assonance:
dry stone no sound of water. Only (24)
Irony: Madame Sosostris ...the wisest woman in Europe
With a wicked pack of cards (44-45)
Antistrophe: A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many. (62-63)
Allusion: "I had not thought death had undone so many" (6)



We have a number of poetic devices in this poem. It is a modernist poem with a lot of symbols. The Waste Land is of course, the grand symbol we have in this poem, the Waste Land for people and civilization which does not have much meaning. We have the allusion in April is the cruellest month, breeding to Chaucer, we have transferred epithet in dull roots and forgetful snow. Rhetorical question, what are the roots that clutch? What branches grow? Nothing grows, it is a question. Then, we have alliteration and assonance in the same line that is why I have put them together like this, dry stone no sound of water, Only. 'O' sound represents this assonance and the 'da' sound represents this alliteration, when we have them together, there is some music, there is some rhythm in it. Dry stone no sound of water, Only.

Then we have the irony, these are the lines that we have to remember in the case of Madame Sosostris.

"Madame Sosostris, ...the wisest woman in Europe

With a wicked pack of cards"

She is considered to be the wisest woman but she has a wicked pack of cards, then what is the use of wisdom? Is there any ignorance? That is the question that we have to remember, that is why irony operates very powerfully in this poem. We have a rhetorical figure called Antistrophe, we have this example here, you will understand from the underlined words which are repeated at the end of the lines;

“A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many”

When we have these repetitions at the end, this is antistrophe. When we have these repetitions at the beginning, we have Anaphora.

Then we have one more allusion here, ‘I had not thought death had undone so many,’ referring to the historical reality of deaths of so many people, millions and millions of people during the first World War and many wars fought in 20th century and many deaths happening during this Covid time. Perhaps, we will have another Waste Land poem out of this Covid 19 now.

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Poetic Devices

Allusion:
“You hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, – mon frère! (76)

Alliteration and Assonance:
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing) 81

Consonance:
Unguent, powdered or liquid – troubled, confused (88)


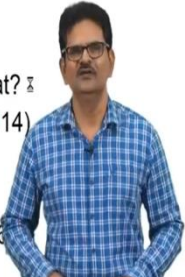
Onomatopoeia: “Jug, jug” to dirty ears (103)

Metaphor: desert, rock,

Clipping: What are you thinking now? What thinking? What? ɹ
I never know what you are thinking. Think. (113-114)

Anaphora: What shall I do? (131, 132, 134)

Rhetorical Question:
What you get married for if you don't want children? (16)

We have more number of poetic devices, one allusion is here, we referred to this earlier- “you hypocrite lecteur!, -mon semblable,- mon frère” This is a quotation from a French poet called Baudelaire. Meaning - you hypocrite reader, my likeness, my brother. We have, again,

alliteration and assonance in one line; 'another hid his eyes behind his wing.' 'Ha' sound represents alliteration and 'e' sound actually, represents assonance.

Then we have consonance in another line- unguent, powdered or liquid- troubled, confused. Then we have the sound at the end of the word- powdered, liquid, troubled, confused that is consonance in contrast to alliteration. We have imitating sounds called onomatopoeia through jug, jug and many other sounds, here, we have the example of 'jug, jug,' then we have metaphor and symbol; These are found throughout the poem, the major metaphor that we have in this is, a desert and rock, representing no meaning, no water, no life. We have a curious case of clipping- how words are reduced one after another. What are you thinking now? What thinking? What? I never know what you are thinking. Think. So, the number of words are progressively reduced, that is why we call it clipping.

Then we have anaphora which is repeated at the beginning of the line- what shall I do? repeated several times, then we have a very important rhetorical question addressing the main theme of the poem- fertility and sterility. What you get married for, if you do not want children? In personal life, between a husband-wife, if they do not want to have children and have sex without the aim of procreation, what is the use of that? That is a big question that Eliot asks in this poem.

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Rhyme, Rhythm, and Meter

Free verse: but it has its own rhyme and rhythm

Repetition: words, images, tones, themes

Rhyme: end and internal

Feminine rhymes in the opening lines: breeding (1), mixing (2), stirring (3), covering (5), feeding (6); "Spring" appears before "rain."

Rhythm: speech of upper and lower classes (Duchess & Cockney woman)

Meter: Polymetrical

April is the cruellest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with spring rain.



Let us pay some attention to rhyme, rhythm and meter. In this poem, we must remember that this poem was written in free verse, this is one of the best modernist poems breaking all traditional, conventional rules of writing poetry. So, we can say that this poem, in spite of

being written in free verse, it has some rhyme and rhythm of its own through lot of repetitions of words, of images, tones, themes.

However, we also notice some end and internal rhymes. Specifically, we notice feminine rhymes at the opening lines like breeding, mixing, stirring, covering, feeding, spring appears before rain in the line. Not in season. Rhythm refers to the speech pattern of the common people or upper-class people from kings and queens to this kind of fortune teller- Madame Sosostris, ordinary people, lower class people, all kinds of people are there. So, all these speech patterns are represented in The Waste Land. That is why we have this Duchess on the one hand and Cockney woman on the other hand. When we want to look at the meter, we can say that the meter of this poem is polymetrical, because there are many metrical variations.

As you can see, as we said earlier, the number of syllables in each line is reduced progressively from first line to the fourth line. We have almost 10 syllables in the first line, then 9, then 7, then 6. So, this is how it is reduced. And then, there are many lines with 10 syllables, some with 2 syllables, some with 3, 4. Wide variety of line lengths we have. So, metrical variations are bound to occur. We can, at best, call it polymetrical.

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Overall Impression

- The speaker prefers to die like the Cumaean Sibyl because the spring season brings and renews life which is meaningless and hopeless.
- The society is decayed and degenerate in all walks of life, including the rulers.
- What remains in the modern world is a heap of broken images and a heap of dust.
- People do not have a sense of life at all in the alienated, unreal, and hypocritical world.
- Madame Sosostris deceives meaning seekers.
- The past too has its share of empty life as seen in Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Philomela and the modern nervous woman, who is again connected with the mad and drowned Ophelia.



To give an overall impression of the two sections, The Burial of the Dead and The Game of Chess that we have seen in this poem, we can list the following points. The speaker of the poem, there are many speakers, you must understand. Many voices are there. Let us say the speaker prefers to die like the Cumaean Sibyl because the spring season brings and renews life which is meaningless and hopeless.

The society is decayed and degenerate in all walks of life, including the rulers. The First World War was started because of the assassination of a king, due to several reasons and this is one of them. What remains in the modern world is a heap of broken images and a heap of dust. People do not have a sense of life at all in the alienated, unreal and hypocritical world.

Madame Sosostris deceives meaning seekers. If he looks for some meaning, there are people to deceive us. The past too has its share of empty life as seen in the lives of Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Philomela and the modern nervous woman, who is again connected with the mad and drowned Ophelia in this poem.

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Summary

- Historical and Literary Context
- T S Eliot
- Eliot's Poetic Theory
- *The Waste Land*: Publication
- *The Waste Land*: Structure
- Selected Passages from Sections I and II
- Analysis



On the whole, we have seen the historical and literary context of TS Eliot who came up with an impersonal theory of poetry in his essay, 'Tradition and the individual talent,' writing this poem, *The Waste Land* with a huge publication history, a very interesting publication history for making money out of this poem.

We looked at the structure of the poem, that is five sections and then we read selections from 2 sections: section 1 and section 2. Analysed the poem linguistically and rhetorically, mainly rhetorically looking at the poetic devices, then, giving an overall impression of the poem.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:34)

References

- Bloom, Harold. 2007. *T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land*. Infobase Publishing, New York.
- North, Michael. ed. 2001. *T. S. Eliot The Waste Land*. Norton, New York.
- Davidson, Harriet. 1994. "Improper Desire: Reading *The Waste Land*." In *The Cambridge Companion to T S Eliot*, ed. A. D. Moody. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. pp.121-131.
- Rainey, Lawrence. 1989. "The Price of Modernism," *Critical Quarterly*, 31 (4): 21-47.



Now, let us see some references. These references will specifically be useful to the first section. Of course, these references will be useful to the whole of the poem.