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# **T.S.ELIOT'S THE WASTE LAND : A CRITICAL STUDY**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ  
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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this research to my supervisor, Asst.Prof.Hussein AL Hussein. Your guidance, support, and encouragement have been invaluable throughout this journey. Thank you for your wisdom and for believing in my potential.

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## Introduction

Thomas Stearns Eliot, commonly known as T.S. Eliot, was an influential American-British poet, essayist, and playwright, born on September 26, 1888, in St. Louis, Missouri. Eliot's works have significantly impacted modern literature, establishing him as a central figure in 20th-century poetry. His literary career began in the early 1900s, culminating in a collection of notable works, including "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Waste Land," and "The Four Quartets." Eliot's writings often explore themes of disillusionment, spiritual emptiness, and the fragmentation of contemporary life, reflecting the anxieties of a post-World War I society.

One of Eliot's most celebrated works, "The Waste Land" (1922), encapsulates the malaise of the time while presenting a complex tapestry of voices, allusions, and cultural references. The poem is structured in five sections, each revealing different aspects of despair and hope. Through its varied forms and rich intertextuality, "The Waste Land" challenges traditional poetic forms and embraces modernist techniques, such as stream-of-consciousness and juxtaposition. Eliot uses these elements to mirror the chaotic reality of the modern world, effectively capturing the disorientation felt by many in the aftermath of the war.

Eliot's groundbreaking approach to poetry facilitated a shift in literary paradigms, pushing boundaries and encouraging subsequent generations of poets to break away from conventional norms. In "The Waste Land," he employed a collage of voices and materials, reflecting the fragmentation of modern experience. For instance, the imagery of barrenness and the recurring references to myth and religion underscore the existential crises faced by individuals in a world stripped of meaning. literature on a deeper level, prompting them to seek personal understanding and connection amidst the chaos.

# **Chapter One**



## **1.1 T.S. Eliot's Life:**

T.S. Eliot was born in 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. He grew up in a family with deep roots in New England, which influenced his literary sensibilities. Eliot attended Harvard University, where he studied philosophy and literature, earning his bachelor's degree in 1909. He also spent time studying in Paris and at the Sorbonne, broadening his literary and cultural horizons.

In 1914, Eliot moved to London, where he became involved in the vibrant literary and cultural scene of the early 20th century. He quickly gained recognition as a leading voice of modernism. His most famous work, "The Waste Land," published in 1922, is considered a modernist masterpiece that reflects the spiritual and cultural desolation of post-World War I Europe. The poem is renowned for its structure and rich use of allusion, drawing from various literary traditions.

Eliot was not only a poet but also a significant literary critic and editor. His essays, such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent," contributed to the understanding of modern literature and its context. Throughout his life, he continued to write poetry and plays, with notable works including "Four Quartets" (1943), which explores themes of time and spirituality, and "Murder in the Cathedral" (1935), a play about the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Becket.

In addition to his literary contributions, Eliot was actively involved in the Anglican Church, which influenced his later works and beliefs. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948 for his outstanding contribution to modern poetry.

T.S. Eliot passed away in 1965 in London, England, leaving behind a profound literary legacy that continues to influence writers and poets today.

His exploration of modernity, tradition, and the human condition has made him one of the most significant figures in 20th-century literature.

## **T.S. Eliot's Works:**

### **1.2 Poetry:**

1. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (1915): A seminal modernist poem exploring themes of isolation, anxiety, and the paralysis of modern life.

- Eliot, T.S. (1915). The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Poetry Magazine.

2. Prufrock and Other Observations (1917): A collection of early poems that focus on urban alienation and the passage of time.

- Eliot, T.S. (1917). Prufrock and Other Observations. London: Ezra Pound.

3. The Waste Land (1922): T.S. Eliot's body of work represents a significant evolution in 20th-century modernist literature, as explored in "The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot," edited by A.D. Moody. His poetry, including "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Waste Land," and "Four Quartets," delves into themes such as disillusionment, existential angst, and the search for spiritual meaning. A landmark poem depicting the disillusionment and spiritual barrenness following World War I.

- Eliot, T.S. (1922). The Waste Land. New York: Boni and Liveright.

4. The Hollow Men (1925): A concise examination of spiritual emptiness and moral decay after the war.

- Eliot, T.S. (1925). The Hollow Men. In: The Hollow Men and Other Poems. London: Faber & Faber.

5. Four Quartets (1943): A mature work weaving together philosophical, religious, and personal reflections on time and spirituality.

- Eliot, T.S. (1943). Four Quartets. London: Faber & Faber.

### **1.3 Drama:**

Eliot's contributions extend to dramatic literature, with "Murder in the Cathedral" showcasing his ability to intertwine poetic language with profound moral dilemmas, exploring faith and sacrifice.

1. Murder in the Cathedral (1935): A verse drama exploring themes of martyrdom, guilt, and the nature of evil through the story of Thomas Becket.

- Eliot, T.S. (1935). Murder in the Cathedral. London: Faber & Faber.

2. The Family Reunion (1939): A verse drama focusing on family dysfunction, intergenerational guilt, and the path to redemption.

- Eliot, T.S. (1939). The Family Reunion. London: Faber & Faber.

3. The Cocktail Party (1950): A comedy of manners that examines the complexities of modern relationships and moral dilemmas.

- Eliot, T.S. (1950). The Cocktail Party. London: Faber & Faber.

4. The Confidential Clerk (1953): A humorous exploration of identity and relationships within a modern society.

- Eliot, T.S. (1953). The Confidential Clerk. London: Faber & Faber.

### **1.4 Critical and Philosophical Works:**

1. The Sacred Wood (1920): Essays discussing poetry and criticism, emphasizing the importance of tradition and individual talent in literature.

- Eliot, T.S. (1920). The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism. London: Faber & Faber.

2. Selected Essays (1932): A collection of essays addressing a wide range of literary, cultural, and societal topics.

- Eliot, T.S. (1932). Selected Essays. London: Faber & Faber.

3. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933): Lectures that analyze the roles of poetry and criticism in society.

- Eliot, T.S. (1933). The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism. London: Faber & Faber.

4. Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (1948): A philosophical exploration of culture and civilization, discussing their significance in human life.

- Eliot, T.S. (1948). Notes Towards the Definition of Culture. London: Faber & Faber.

5. The Idea of a Christian Society (1939): A commentary advocating for a Christian perspective as foundational for creating a just society.

- Eliot, T.S. (1939). The Idea of a Christian Society. London: Faber & Faber.

## Chapter Two

# **"T.S. Eliot: A Philosophical Exploration of Existence"**

## **2.1 The Existential Crisis:**

Eliot's poetry frequently mirrors the existential crisis that defines the modern era. This crisis is marked by feelings of meaninglessness and spiritual emptiness, as his characters confront the harsh realities of urban life, the devastating impacts of war, and the decline of traditional values. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," for instance, the protagonist epitomizes the paralysis and self-doubt that plague many individuals in contemporary society, reflecting a deep sense of disconnection and uncertainty.

## **2.2 The Quest for Transcendence:**

While much of Eliot's early work presents a bleak worldview, his later poetry, especially in "Four Quartets," reveals a pathway to hope. In this collection, Eliot investigates the potential for transcendence through a more profound understanding of time, history, and the very nature of existence. By grappling with the inherent limitations of human life, he proposes that individuals can achieve a heightened state of consciousness and spiritual fulfillment.

## **2.3 Key Themes in Eliot's Work|:**

**2.3.1 Alienation:** A prevalent theme whereby Eliot's characters often experience profound isolation, struggling to find their identity and place in a tumultuous world.

**2.3.2 The Waste Land:** This groundbreaking poem encapsulates the desolation and despair characterizing post-World War I society, vividly illustrating the collapse of traditional values and the absence of spiritual direction.

**2.3.3 Time and History:** Eliot's reflections on time and history underscore the cyclical patterns of human experience and the critical role the past plays in shaping the present.

**2.3.4 The Quest for the Absolute:** In "Four Quartets," Eliot embarks on a journey to go beyond the constraints of time and space, aspiring to connect with a higher, more profound reality.

## **2.4 The Symbols:**

### **2.4.1 The City**

One of the most prominent symbols in Eliot's poetry is the modern city. In poems like "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "The Waste Land," the urban landscape represents the alienation and isolation characteristic of modern existence. The city is depicted as a place of disconnection, where individuals are overwhelmed by the chaos and anonymity of urban life. This environment mirrors the fragmented nature of modern society, highlighting feelings of despair and the loss of traditional values and, illustrating oss, disconnecti stry of images, in a rapidly cha ext of Imagism complexities octed in a diffe sual lives of t y rich and ver relations man ies. At the beg man: "The cha n et al., 2005; mythological story no one is hed throne" d

### **2.4.2 Memory and History**

T.S. Eliot, in his works, utilizes memory and history as potent symbols of modernity. His exploration of time often reveals a cyclical perspective, where the past and present are inextricably intertwined. In "Four Quartets," he underscores the crucial role of memory in shaping both individual and collective identities (Eliot, 1943).

\* Cyclicalality of Time: Eliot posits that comprehending and reconciling with the past is paramount for navigating the complexities of modern existence. Through the act of remembrance, individuals can discover meaning within their lives amidst the chaos of contemporary experiences.



## **Chapter Three**

## Critical Analysis

### 3.1 The Burial of the Dead

The first part of the poem is titled as "The Burial of the Dead" implying death and resurrection. The very first stanza is popularly quoted and it shocks the reader as it depicts the picture of a broken culture:

April is the cruelest 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. (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922)

In the very first line of the poem, Eliot (1922) depicts a picture of April which contrasts with that of Geoffrey Chaucer (1340 AD-1400 AD) in *Canterbury Tales*. While Chaucer depicts April to be a month of regeneration, optimism and flourishing, Eliot (1922) depicts it to be pessimism, confusion and melancholy. Despite the fact the April is widely considered as the month of sanguine hope and regeneration, in Eliot's (1922) introspection, the people in the modern waste land have lost the hope and they are suffering from the lack regenerative wills and actions. The "spring rain" of April are supposed to regenerate "Lilacs out of the dead land" and stir the "dull roots" but symbolically, the waste landers are suffering from the sluggishness and passivity.

The potential "desire" of April by its "rains" out of "memory" symbolically represents that people in the waste land despite having innate capacity to regenerate themselves are suffering from forgetfulness about their ultimate aims of life. They are drying their possibilities through self-defeating negligence.

Parashar (2015) remarks, "...sadly modern man is struck between the 'memory' of the past and 'desire' for the future to revive it." Here, "memory" alludes to the reminding of "spiritual awakening" (Mahfoud, 2009) that the people in the modern world tend to forget, Jain (1991) observes, "awareness causes pain and suffering, consequently most people suffer oblivion from the burden of consciousness, and death-in-life existence."

In *The Waste Land*, we do find any formal introduction or setting. There is the first statement of the seven lines and then we are introduced with Marie, a girl belonging to an aristocratic class. She spends her time aimlessly travelling, gossiping, sledging, drinking coffee and reading books till late night. Then, Marie's cousin is mentioned and he follows the same lifestyle like Marie. Mahfoud (2009) argues that the lifestyles of Marie and her cousin indicate that modern people spend having no higher aim and they dislike warmth of spring which symbolizes the spiritual awakening. They spend time mostly talking and drinking coffee and this is a recurrent criticism of modern lifestyle in many poems of T.S Eliot (Jain, 1991).

After the episode of Marie and her cousin, according Bloom (2007), the poet raises the central question of the poem, "What are the roots that clutch?" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922) and Bloom (2007) asserts that the provocative question "states directly the problem the poem confronts throughout its five cryptic, fragmented sections." As a complimentary question Eliot raises another question, "what branches grow out of this stony rubbish?" "Branches" and "Stoney rubbish" symbolically represent "people's lives" and "culture".

Obviously, the poet makes a relation between "roots", "branches" and "culture" implying that in "stony rubbish" no roots or branches are supposed to sprout and thrive.

Bloom (2007) presents an analysis of the question, "How can there be a civilization worthy of mankind and how can mankind itself be whole, wholesome, and create a worthy culture, if the environment in which it grows undermines life rather than nurtures it." And "How can rootlessness and up rootedness be repaired?". In answer to the questions raised by the poet, the poet answers with Biblical resonance: "Son of man, / You cannot say or guess (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). It implies that the waste landers are unable to see the reality as they are uprooted.

They are only interested in meaningless images and lead meaningless lives. In the articulation of the poet, "...for you know only/A heap of broken images" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). Their lives are dried with "no sound of water" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922) which is symbol of renewal and regeneration. Here, Bloom (2007) makes an insightful comment, "The Waste Land is a riddle the reader must unravel in the quest to find "roots that clutch." But there is a concluding line in the poem, "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922) implying that the poet's search has remained fragmentary in the quest he makes for an integrated worldview or cultural wholeness.

The poet invites the spiritually dead waste landers to take shelter under "the shadow of this rock" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922) which implies a peaceful spiritual shelter or at least it would provide them scopes to contemplate on the lack of spirituality. The following lines mention the word "shadow":

(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. (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922)

It appears the permanent shadow of the rock is different from the shadow which is a representation of temporary human life. In Eliot's (1922) religious understanding, "Fear" has its positive connotation. Weinberg (1969) argues that for Eliot, "religion and fear of hell are means to establish order rather than a deep-rooted personal fear or belief...Eliot's whole work is an attempt to reintroduce order into what seems to him a chaotic world." Then, in the poem in contrast to the poet's invitation, he cites two romantic love affairs which are devoid of divinity and sacredness (Ahmed, 2019); one is from an opera named "Tristan and Isolde" by Wilhem Richard Wagner (1813 AD-1883AD), another is of hyacinth girl. Both the love affairs end with tragic consequences. We are introduced with Madame Sosostris, a fortune teller, as the next character. Like the hyacinth lovers, Madame Sosostris is unable to recognize the symbolic significance of the Tarot cards. Eliot (1922), it appears, strongly criticizes the debasement of the Tarot pack which has spiritual connotations. This signifies that modern people lacking in spiritual vision of life has started debasing the sacred connotations of anything (Ahmed, 2019) and Madame Sosostris is representative of them. It is here depicted that crowds of people are wandering aimlessly and mechanically.

Until the end of first section, the poet has depicted the solitary individuals "lost in decaying, desolate landscape, or it has been on scraps of conversation between people at a loss in a café, in a room of a garden, at fortune-teller's den" (Bloom, 2007). The poet then, in the final stanza, shows us the crowd of people in the city which he calls "Unreal City" where he

draws the wretched picture of modern city-dwellers. The "Unreal City", here, is London which could be representative of all modern cities of modern civilization:

Unreal City,

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many.

I had not thought death had undone so many (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922).

The people are spiritually dead in the city. They, according to the poet, is "undone" by death implying that they are spiritually dead. There are indications that they could be compared with the damned in Dante's hell. Their sighs are "short and infrequent" and they hardly look at one another: "And each man fixed his eyes before his feet" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). Thus, the landscape of the London is not real; it is unreal because "its inhabitants, their lives and relations are unreal" (Mahfoud, 2009). In a hectic profit-oriented busy life, these modern people operate like machines and they have become spiritless.

In the words of George (1962) "Their vision of life does not extend beyond the immediate requirements of daily life." Even the Church bell fails to arouse any higher calling to them, "a dead sound on the final stroke of nine" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). Then, there is a question of a "corpse" "That corpse you planted last year in your garden? Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). Sufian (2014) argues, "Indeed, the corpse here represents consciousness and wisdom, which has been hidden under all these idiocies and superstitious beliefs of modern people."

The section ends with a line from Baudelaire's poem. The line reads, "O hypocrite reader, my fellow man, my brother" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922).

Jain (1991) explains that through this line the poet provokes the readers "to confront in [themselves] the vice of ennui or boredom, [which is] a state of profound spiritual emptiness." It appears, for the poet, it will be hypocrisy to go to the next section without realizing in mind what he has substantiated in this section: the portrayal of a waste land, an unreal city, the spiritually dead people wandering aimlessly. It is as Cooper (2006) views regarding cultural anxiety in Eliot's (1915, 1922) poems:

Yet the sympathy we are asked to feel is not for the existential agonies of "modern man" hoping to have a heart-to-heart conversation in a world of chit-chat, but something more important than that.... silently laments the absence of an external or historical measure or standard for human agency, a criterion embodied in institutions (such as a church, for example) that give individual identities not only metaphysical density but meaning as well.

### **3.2 A Game of Chess:**

The crisis suffered by the people in the first section is also depicted in a different pattern in this section of the poem through the loveless and vulgar sensual lives of two couples. Both the couples belong to two different economic classes very rich and very poor. But, in a similar way they represent the failed and disharmonious relations marked by the absence of meaningful and joyous relations in modern societies. At the beginning, we find an extremely luxurious drawing room of a very rich woman: "The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Glowed on the marble. And, the part ends with the indication of the rape story of a mythological character named Philomela and the poet regrets that from her tragic story no one is taking lessons. Despite the luxuries, the rich woman sitting on the "burnished throne" does not enjoy a harmonious life and relation; rather, she is suffering from psychological disorder.

Her conversations remain uncommunicated with her interlocutor who appears to be in "listless despair, a man of weak stone, lost and impotent in his response the theme of communication—or the lack thereof—plays a significant role in illustrating the characters' emotional and spiritual desolation. As noted by Bloom (2007), the absence of effective communication and frustrating conversations is clearly evident in the following lines from the poem:

"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."

(Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922)

These lines reflect a woman's desperate longing for connection, highlighting her deep sense of isolation. She embodies a character from the wasteland who suffers from profound ennui and alienation. Her lack of awareness about her actions and existence is captured in her lament: "What shall I do now? What shall I do?" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). Her expression of boredom and sense of meaninglessness is further emphasized when she states, "With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow? / What shall we ever do?" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922).

The narrative transitions from an upper-class drawing room to a public pub, where a conversation unfolds between two women, frequently interrupted by the shout, "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). This scene portrays the spiritual emptiness of conjugal life, focusing on Lil and Albert. Albert returns home after his time in the army, and another woman advises Lil to appear attractive for her husband's sake.



Unfortunately, Lil's health has deteriorated due to abortion pills, illustrating the theme of "mechanical fertility" (Mayer, 1989). The line, "What you get married for if you don't want children?" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922), reflects the shallow, lust-driven relationships present in the wasteland, devoid of reverence for procreation and the sanctity of family life. This sentiment suggests that the inhabitants of the wasteland show diminishing interest in family life, which is traditionally viewed as the cornerstone of a healthy society. The final words in this scene poignantly remind us of the tragic consequences of loveless relationships.

### **3.3 The Fire Sermon:**

The title of the third section-"The Fire Sermon" is based on Buddha's fire sermon where he preached against the fires of worldly attachments and desires. Through the obsession of worldly desires and pleasures, the characters in this section- the visitors on the bank of the Thames, the typist girl and her lover, the Thames daughters- have metamorphosed themselves to the level of animality and are suffering from ennui. At the beginning the poet talks about the lust of the prostitutes and their rich clients who are extremely reluctant to build any sacred and permanent relationships. This has become infectious and the banks of the Thames are frequented by such people. Contrasting the depictions of characters by Spenser and Eliot on the banks of the Thames, Bloom (2007), argues, "Spenser's world is alive with nymphs, flowers, Bridal couples and glories all brought together by the poet...to celebrate meaningful marriage in a fecund world" and on the other hand, in Eliot's (1922) waste land, it is rat-like debasement: "A rat crept softly through the vegetation/ Dragging its sli my belly on the bank" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). The first section of The Waste Land, has depicted the sterility and barrenness of the modern culture and the consequent crisis in modern man.

In the second and third sections, the anxiety has been articulated more specifically. The rich but neurotic woman and Lil, the wretched wife of a soldier in the second section and the indifferent and mechanical relation between the "typist girl" and a small house agent's clerk in the third section are some stories of disharmonious and lustful relation in the modern world. They are leading life like automated machines in a world dominated by industrial market economy and impersonal machines. The poet captures such a scene in the lifestyle of the "typist girl" he introduces us with: "When the human engine waits/ Like a taxi throbbing waiting" and "She smoothes her hair with automatic hand" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922). Islam (1984) asserts, "The destiny of modern man has long ceased to be under his own control. He is unthinking, unprotesting automation, thoroughly undone by death."

This section with the meeting of East and West through Buddha and St. Augustine and Eliot mentions that the "collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident" (Mahfoud, 2009):

To Carthage then I came O Lord thou pluckest me out

Burning burning burning burning

O Lord thou Pluckest

Burning

The section ends with the word "burning" without having a full stop. Though the ascetic traditions have been hinted at, the fire of lust and unrestrained vulgarity in modern world has been dominant in the section.

### **3.4 Death by Water:**

The title of the fourth section in *The Waste Land* is "Beath by Water." Among five sections of the poem, this is the briefest one. Here, trough the sudden drowning and death of a Phoenician sailor and business man has been indicated to show the impermanence of the worldly life modern people are so obsessed with. Through his death, the poet reminds the waste landers about their own death and the futility of the pursuance of worldly desires with no redemptive promises: "O you who turn the wheel and look to windward, / Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you" (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922).

### **3.5 What the Thunder Said:**

The fifth and last part of the poem is titled "What the Thunder said" implying to one Hindu spiritual anecdotes of the Upanishad bearing the implications to restore personal and cultural order in the society and world. The sterility and barrenness of modern culture have been also depicted here in continuation with the preceding sections. The poet's sense of anxiety has been acute here. Though there are some glimpses of hope to overcome the anxiety with reference to some spiritual anecdotes of Christianity and Hinduism, the crisis and anxiety continues to me prevalent and dominant (Ahmed, 2019). In this section, a symbolic pilgrimage by two Christian worshippers in search of the holy "grail" is narrated. The holy "grail" is traditionally considered as the cup which is associated with the holy memory of Jesus Christ. It is believed that Jesus Christ drank from this cup at the last supper and it was used to collect his blood at his crucifixion. The pilgrimage in search of holy "grail" allegorically represents the spiritual journey and here it indicates, at the same time, the spiritual blindness of the pilgrims who could not identify Christ (Jain, 1991):

Who is the third who always beside you? When I count, there are only you and I together But when I look ahead up the white road There is always another one walking beside you Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded (Ferguson et al., 2005; Eliot, 1922).

Mayer (1989) argues, the third person is "the ability to see beyond the flat two dimensionality of the world of appearances and enter, through the third dimension, into a world of depth, the reality manifest to the eye of faith, whether Christina, Hindu, or Buddhist, Western or Eastern." Then, the spiritual focus has been shifted from Christianity to Hinduism referring to a fable of Brihadaranyaka Upahishadd. Here Prajapati (creator-God Brahma in Hindu mythology) pronounces the syllable "Da". "Da" is rendered as "Datta, Dayadhvam, and Damyata." In these three spiritual advices, human beings have been advised: "Be self- controlled! Give! Be Compassionate!" (Mahfoud, 2009) and it is apparent that human beings are being advised to practise these three commands.

Here, it appears, through the commandments, the poet realizes that the waste landers or modern people are suffering from unrestrained egotism, self-centeredness and cruelty of various forms. These are the solution to the "cultural disintegration" to recover the "sense of loss" in modern age (Mahfoud, 2009) as we find the poet mentioning in the poem: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (Ferguson et al., 2005; T. S.

Eliot, 1922). Cooper (2004) opines that in Eliot's social and cultural criticism after 1922, the poet "argues for the reconstitution of an anthropologically integrated society that normative liberalism has shattered."

## Conclusion

In exploring the life and works of T.S. Eliot, we encounter a writer whose literary contributions transcend mere storytelling; they probe the depths of culture and human experience. Eliot's oeuvre is marked by a profound engagement with the complexities of modernity, reflecting both a celebration and a lamentation of cultural identity. His works delve into the fragmented state of contemporary life, challenging readers to confront their own relationship with art and society. Through his unique poetic voice, Eliot invites his audience to reflect on the transformation of culture during the 20th century.

In "The Waste Land," arguably Eliot's most celebrated poem, encapsulates his view of a world grappling with cultural disintegration. The poem serves as both a eulogy for the cultural heritage that Eliot perceived to be fading and a critique of the contemporary cultural landscape dominated by popular forms of expression. It wrests meaning from a chaotic post-war reality, intertwining references to diverse cultural and literary traditions, ultimately illustrating the estrangement felt in modern society. By weaving together fragments of knowledge and emotion, the poem becomes a tapestry of the human spirit's struggle amidst desolation.

Eliot's work, particularly "The Waste Land," remains timeless as it offers readers a lens to engage with the past while confronting the pressing challenges of the present. It stands not only as a testament to the richness of our cultural legacy but also as a reminder of the peril of forgetting our roots. In an age where cultural amnesia often prevails, Eliot's literary artistry compels us to consider the importance of remembering and preserving the intricate connections that define our shared human experience.

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