

Pessimism Amid Defeat and Death in T.S. Eliot's Poem "The Waste Land"

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Abstract

This study aims to reflect the Pessimism in the poet: Thomas Stearns Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" in which he represented both an assessment of the World situation during the time of World War 1 as he felt it, a creative transformation of the world that is observed in the final section of the Poem. The Poem 'The Waste Land' is divided into five sections under the titles of: The Burial of the Dead, A Game Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water, and What the Thunder Said. Each section is discussed, and analyzed, and then the researcher draws a conclusion that Eliot is: 1- Not always pessimist. 2- Eliot's poem shows the society during The World War 1.

مستخلص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث لعكس التشاؤم في قصيدة الأرض اليباب للشاعر الأمريكي توماس استيرناليوت و التي يعرض فيها صورة الحرب العالمية الأولى و التحول ما بعد الحرب وذلك يلاحظ في الفصل الأخير من القصيدة . و قد قسمت قصيدة الأرض اليباب إلي خمسة فصول و هي : مقبرة الموت ، لعبة الشطرنج ، الموعدة النارية ، الموت بالماء و ماذا قال الرعد .
وقد نوقشت القصيدة وحللت و من ثم توصل الباحث إلي: أن الشاعر اليوت لم يكن دائماً متشائماً ، كما أن قصيدته الأرض اليباب قد صورت العالم إبان الحرب العالمية الأولى.

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1.0 Introduction

The researcher is going to reflect the pessimism in the American poet Thomas Stearns Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land'. Pessimism, originates from the Latin word *pessimus* (worst), is the decision to evaluate something as negative when it is uncommon to do so. Value judgments may vary dramatically among individuals, even when judgments of fact are undisputed. Philosophical Pessimism is similar but not identical idea that life has a negative value, or that this world is as bad as it could possibly be.

The poem was originally a larger sequence, composed for the most part in the Fall of 1921 when Eliot, on the verge of a nervous breakdown, obtained a paid leave from his city of London bank to Switzerland.

The poem was published in 1922 in the same year the manuscript was sold to the New York collector John Quinn. It was then thought to have been lost, but it is now in the Berg collection of the New York Public library. M.L, Rosenthal (1988:102).

The writing of the poem represented both an assessment of the world as he felt it to be, and a creative transfer motion of it; which is shown the final section 'What the Thunder Said '

His work is reduced to 433 lines. Eliot's poems reflect the chaotic lives of individuals and society as a whole, as Teetah 02(2001:4)

Says: "Modernism thus marks a distinctive break with Victorian bourgeois morality: rejecting nineteenth century optimism, they presented profoundly pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray". Eliot's most distinguishable piece of work concerning the disorder of the community was the Waste Land. Which contains five parts, he produces characters based on the manners of individuals

living during the World War I generation. The characters are going through distress and morals are thrown out the door while they still seek and hope for a good resolution. The stress of the poem is on the conflict surrounding faith instead of the declaration of it. 'The Waste Land' is more of a story in poetical form Leonard John (1996:23).

1.1 The Statement of the Problem:

influentially pessimism, he is famous for pessimism, and constantly succeeded The main reason behind the study is to show that T.S Eliot was a very on his hatred of little things, and his love life.

1.2 Significance of the Study:

The importance of this study is to show that Eliot's poetry informs the reader of certain human circumstances whether they are brilliant or disturbing, also to show the implicit pessimism within the poem.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

The study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To highlight the issue of pessimism.
- b) To draw attention to the whole poem ' The Waste Land ' in which Eliot loves to mock and scorn his ex-wife.
- c) To reflect Eliot's life as both clever and religious.
- d) To show that the conscious mind and the conscious nation can renew and rebuild civilization, and save the world from committing suicide.

1.4 The hypotheses of the Study:

The Study hypothesizes that:

- 1- Eliot is not always pessimist.
- 2- "The Waste Land" portrays vividly the society during World War 1.

1.5 The limitation of the Study

This research is going to be about Pessimism A mid Defeat and Death in T.S Eliot's poem "The Waste Land."

2-T.S. Eliot's Life and Career:

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) had both American and English ties. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 26, 1888. He was educated at Harvard. But he settled in London in 1915 and acquired British citizenship in 1927. To many people, he is the poet who clearly expresses the sense of loss, and fragmentation of modern world –a view that is apparent from the titles of poetic works such as the Waste Land and ' the Hollow Men ' Robert (1985:624)

His father Henry Ware Eliot (1843-1919) was a successful businessman president and treasurer of the Hydraulic in St. Louis. His mother was Charlotte Champe Stearns (1843-1929), wrote poems and was also a social worker. Eliot was the last of six surviving children. He was known to the family and friends as Tom, which was the namesake of his maternal grand – father Thomas Stearns.

Eliot was a poet, dramatist, and literary critic. The family Unitarian in religion was descended from one Andrew Eliot who left East code Summerset, England in the mid-seventeenth century and settled in Massachusetts in American. His earliest writing appeared in the magazine of Smith Academy, St. Louis in 1906. In the following year he entered Harvard, where he contributed, and edited poems to the Advocate. While still in college he wrote several poems, including the title work, published in Prufrock, and other observation (1917). Kermod, F. and, John (1972:1970).

Eliot's main academic interest was philosophy, and in 1910, armed with Harvard M.A., Eliot went to Paris for a year and studied the Philosophy of Henry Bergson (1859-1941). In 1911 he was a graduate assistant in Philosophy at Harvard, and

in 1914 he went to Germany with the intention of studying Philosophy at Marburg. In September 1914, the War having begun, he went instead to Oxford, where he worked on his thesis, study of the Oxford – Philosopher F.H. Bradley Ronald. (1999:5)

In 1915 Eliot married, and taught for some time before joining a bank, where he was to work for eight years. During this time he was an editor of the *Egoist* a London magazine, he was also writing poetry, still influenced by the French symbolist poets. He was also studying the "metaphysical" poets and the Jacobean drama. In poor health he obtained three months leave from his bank, and at a clinic in Lausanne, made "The Waste Land" ready for publication. In January 1922 he stopped in Paris to consult Ezra Pound about the poem until 1939 the *Waste Land* appeared in the first number. In 1925 Eliot became a director of Faber and, Faber, the publishers. In 1927 Eliot took British citizenship, and was received into the Church of England. In 1930 he published *Ash Wednesday*. Kermode, (1972: 1971).

In 1935 Eliot wrote his first play, *Murder in the Cathedral*. It followed by many plays and poems. In 1940 wrote his last important poem "Little Gidding", which is written twenty – three years before his death. In 1948 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He wrote three more plays in 1950, 1954, and 1959.

In 1947 Eliot's wife from whom he had been separated for many years, died after a long illness. In 1957 he married Valerie Fletcher. Eliot died of emphysema in London on January 4, 1965.

Eliot's body was burnt and, according to his wishes, the ashes taken to St Michaels Church in East Coker, the village from which Eliot's ancestors emigrated to America. There, a simple plaque commemorates him. Miller, J. and James, L. (1968:372).

3-Literature Review

The researcher is going to take a glance at some previous studies and criticisms of Eliot.

Eliot's poetry was first criticized as not being poetry at all. Another criticism has been of his widespread interweaving of questions from other authors into his work notes on the waste land " which follows after the poem, gives the source of many of these, but not all this practice has been defended as a necessary saving of tradition in an age of fragmentation, and completely integral to the work, as well adding richness through unexpected juxtaposition.

It has also been condemned as showing a lack of originality, and for plagiarism. The prominent erotic F.W. Bateson once published an essay called "T.S. Eliot: the poetry of Pseudo – Learning".

Eliot himself once wrote { " the Sacred Wood " } " Immature poets imitate, mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at last something different ".

Canadian academic Robert Ian Scott pointed out that the title of the Waste Land and some of the images had previously appeared in the work of a minor Kentucky poet Madison Cawing (1865-1914) Bevis Hillier compared Casein's lines ... come and go / Around its ancient portico " with Eliot's " ... come and go / talking of Michelangelo ", (this line actually appears in Eliot's " the love song "of J. Alfred Brufrock", and not in the Waste Land). Caweins "Waste Land" had appeared in the January 1913 issue of Chicago Magazine Poetry (which contained an article by Ezra Pound on London poets). But scholars are continually finding new sources for Eliot's Waste Land, often in odd places.

Eliot has been paid tribute from many famous fellow writers, and critics. According to 1 329 : Ted Hughes," Each year

Eliot's presence declares itself at a deeper level, to an audience that is surprised to find itself more chastened, more astonished, more humble. "Hugh Kenner," (1969:150). Eliot has been the most gifted and influential literary erotic in English in the twentieth century." C.S Lewis however thought his literary criticism "superficial and unscholarly". in a 1935 letter to a mutual friend of theirs, Paul Elmer Moore Lewis wrote that he considered the work of Eliot to be " a very great evil". Although in a letter to Eliot written in 1943, Lewis showed an admiration for Eliot a long with his antagonism towards his views when he wrote: " I hope the fact that I find myself often contradicting you in print gives no offence, it is a kind of tribute to you – whenever I fall of some widespread contemporary view about literature I always seem to find that you have expressed it most dearly. One aims at the officers first in meeting an attack!".

Lennard, J (1996-140) says "Eliot has a reputation as a difficult poet, and if you give a class a passage ascribed to Eliot, many students seem unable to respond because "Eliot's too difficult for me".

Stephen M. (1984:97) says: "the modern age in poetry really begins with T.S. Eliot. His poetry moved from skepticism and despair to a Christian faith and hope, and the waste land (1922) revolutionized poetry".

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

In this part the researcher i 328 to analyze the Waste Land, by dividing the poem into five sections under the titles: The Burial of the dead, "A Game of chess" The Fire Sermon" Death by Water, and What the Thunder said.

4-1The first section: "The Burial of the Dead"

Eliot prefaces the poem as follows:

*April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land mixing*

*Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers*

The poem starts with describing the month of April. It described it as the cruelest month, passing over a barren land to which winter is far kinder. Eliot shifts from this vague invocation of time and nature to what seem to be more specific memories: a rain shower by the Starnbergersee, a lake outside Munich. She stopped in the colonnade and went on in sunlight, into the Hofarten where they drank coffee, and talked for an hour. She explained that she is Russian, not German. This stanza ends with her telling him her childhood stories. The poem points that her name is Marie and, she is an aristocrat. In this stanza, Eliot uses "Lilacs"

The usage of the color is to symbolize death and image "tuber" (flower bulbs) to indicate the world climate stage of Hell, which is also depicted by the season April.

The first stanza of the poem contains a few romantic and beautiful imagery from the past, which will not again reappear in the rest of the poem.

This past describes the rural life as a sharp contrast to the horrifying images depicted throughout the rest of the poem – degeneration destructive, decomposing and debilitating, which in result creates a very dist 327 icture of the Waste Land – the world we live. He uses many voices, a sailor from ancient time or voice of a modern man, or Queen Elizabeth's voice.

The second stanza is told from soldier's point of view, (Marie's Lover) here he portrayed the destroyed city buildings and churches that symbolize the destroyed western civilization as in the lines.

*A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the circuit no relief,*

*And the dry stones no sound of water, only
There is shadow under this red rock,*

The above lines indicates the barren and sterile situation of the modern world assimilating the primitive stage of the civilization of the Stone Age he continues

*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 handful of dust.*

The above lines show his state of loneliness. The land is a land of death and depress after the war: Any handful dusts may contain remains which he fears to touch. Also he is very homesick and wants to return to his love and home. He says:

*Your arms full, and your hair well, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, he was neither
Living nor dead, and I know nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence
(Ode und leer das meer) Desolate and empty the sea.*

Eliot shows Un-real city and starts off by describing London (without) translation). The image is that of the horror of Hell.

*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*

The lines explain the image of soldiers from the battle – field as horrifying. He uses the image of death plus his confused state of mind. The lines show his suffer mentally; they also symbolize death reproduces death. He ends section one with his reference to the dog that all soldiers who died in the battle field were murdered and their bodies will be dug upon one word, it shows his resentment towards the war.

*Oh keep the dog far hence, that's friend to men,
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!*

The poet goes on to the second section " A Game of chess " begins with a description of a woman sitting on a beautiful

chair that looks " like an old throne " the poet makes reference to Cleopatra and her first encounter with Anthony .

The woman described in this stanza lives in a very wealthy environment but is as lonely and frustrated as Cleopatra in her relationship with Anthony, places a contrast to her emotional world of darkness boredom and isolation as the lines below mentioned:

*The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought peeped out*

4-2 The Game of chess " as follows:

*Burbed green and orange, framed by the coloured stone
In which sad light a caved dolphin swam
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced: yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears*

The remainder of this stanza describes that it is night. The carved dolphin symbolizes the impasse, the incapability to escape just like woman herself. The scene over the fireplace the " sylvan scene " where Philomel, a girl, who was raped by her sister's husband, the barbaric king Tereus, who also cut her tongue, she was changed into the nightingale, is being pursued by him and the sound she can utter is only "jug jug" the singing voice to convey her true feelings, which make it such an ironic situation and also reflects the rich woman's lack of ability to express her emotions.

The second stanza of the second section is reflective of loneliness. It is conversation about the absence of conversation

between the parties included as the result of inability to express how she truly feels,

" My nerves are bad to-night, 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"

She is so angry and not understanding. She is ready to argue opposite to what she had planed to do a romantic, night, a reunion. She cannot deal with the silence from her partner. But her partner answered. He explains the war syndrome. It is obvious that the turmoil arose from all the deaths in the war was still haunting the war participant when he said:

I think we are in rats, alley

Where the dead men lost their bones

The loneliness and dryness of their relationship is described. She is tired of being in the house, of doing nothing, and of not having a decent conversation," what shall I do now? "I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street I with my hair down, so "Here she is ready to be disloyal to her lover because of his lack of presence on their relationship or his loss of manhood in the war. The reply is coming at once from him: "What shall we ever do . . . we shall play a game of chess. Pressing lidless eyes, . . . waiting for a knock upon the door". His sounds so distant and absent, minded.

He even suggests his consent to her cheating by saying "play a game of chess". Also he displays his war syndrome by saying he can no longer sleep (lidless eyes) and is just waiting for death to knock the door, "But actually "Lil's husband got demobbed".

The rest of section two, shows the dialogue between two women are chatting, about the coming of Lil's husband from the war so as be pretty for him, otherwise he will desert her to another, Marie is hurrying Lil to get her teeth fixed, she suggests that if she is not someone else will be. Lil has five

children and started to take contraceptive in order to prevent any more children so, she was appearing " antique" the ironic message in this scene is that: Lil is the only who believes " What you get married for If you don't want children "and yet she is withering away” – she is only thirty – one – like a Waste land. As the line says:

*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, IT'S TIME:*

4.3 The Fire Sermon

The researcher is going to touch section three the fire sermon. Here Eliot describes his world in which he lives He uses the image of the dead earth with the bare trees and the empty spaces to convey the feeling of death being dominant and the vacancy it has left behind as in these lines.

*The rivers tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind*

Crosses the Brown Land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.

The poet also describes the city which has been abandoned for some time and no human a 323 can be the town which is reflected in the below lines.

*The river bears no empty bottles sandwich papers
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Even the bank executives have left for good leaving*

The departure was not by choice it was against their will, can be observed in these lines.

*Departed, have left no addresses
By the waters of lemon I sat down and wept*

The above creates a dominating sad mood of loss. The below line,

'The rattle of the bones and chuckle spread from ear to ear'

The above line, personifies death and its contentment with recent triumph. The deserted land covered with deathly pale, and the memories of war.

Eliot uses the war song which describes women washing their feet in the soda water to symbolize the alluring trap, which will kill them. The lines show lovers no intentions of resulting in marriage or reproducing offspring. This description indicates the opinion of an infertile land – a theme that permeates throughout the entire poem. Also Eliot uses music to symbolize the past, and the beautiful flowing waters which have become distant memories, they burnt away as the bodies and the building went up into flames. As we observe on the lines:

*This music crept by me upon the waters
The pleasant whining of mandoline
My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet .after the event
He wept .he promised a new start"
I made no comment what should I resent?
Nothing*

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Burning, burning, burning, burning.

The song takes us to a scene where Queen Elizabeth and her loves Leicester are having a great time together. Unfortunately Queen Elizabeth discovered Leicester disloyalty. But really she had own reasons why she could not marry Leicester, because she feels she belongs to her people

4-4 Sections four and five

Death by Water and What the Thunder Said:

The poet uses Phlebas, the Phoenician's story to convince the usage the will be no revival or resurrection after ones death

like Phlebas, whose bones are destroyed by the ocean currents. Eliot uses water to represent the illusion of tranquility and the troubles one goes through life the quote " picked his bones in whispers " expresses how ironic water can be where – although – it is peaceful but has deadly side. This shows the effect misconception have on one's judgment, and the grim picture of the future, the whirlpool is a grave the same as a rhomb. We cannot escape from death no matter who you are. That observed in the lines.

*Picked his bones in whispers ad he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the Whirlpool.*

In the last section Eliot portrays a vivid image of the Waste Land. The mountain symbolizes nature which usually has the power to regenerate itself now is dead. Rain symbolizes hope. Hope is almost invisible "The red sullen faces" sneer and snarl" remind us of animals who are frustrated and intimidated and read to attack. That can be seen in these lines:

*There is not even solitude in the mountain
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even . 321 in the mountains
But red sullen jaces sneer and share!
From doors of mud cracked houses*

The poet portrays the chaos of Eastern Europe after world War I. Also he turns towards the eastern cultures, and their ideas to seek a solution to all these pending issues in the western world.

Eliot ends his poem the Waste Land " with the words:

"Shantih, shantih, shantih"

Dominique (2008:5) says : " shanah, shanah, are eastern words that suggest we will gain peace by giving up our needs, by reconciliation with the word , and by creating a Zen state of mind only in this way the world can be in pace. If people

maintain this, the end result would be fertility of our land again.

5-Conclusion and Recommendation:

In Conclusion to the pervious knowledge about Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" informs the reader of certain human circumstances. The world was suffering from a turning point caused by the world war I and many of the population's young men were killed.

Eliot's poem reflects the chaoticness of individuals and society as a whole: throughout the entire poem the waste land "Eliot believes that there is only one way out of the waste – land –. That way is to be truly Christian society. Keep (1993: 4) states that: "Eliot stressed that: morals and assurance was passed down through culture and that culture cannot be separated from religion".

The researcher has found out that:

- (1) Eliot is not always pessimist, but the circumstance needs so, that means the first hypothesis is accepted.
- (2) Eliot's poetry connects the society by providing a window into individual thought and behaviors of that time period. The second hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher recommends the following:

- a) To find away in the university syllabus for the period of modern poetry, because it was rich with an advanced type that freed itself from the old ties, and opened new schools for the coming generation.
- b) To prepare a manuscript which enable the analysts and critics of this period to enlighten and illuminate the scholar's insight.
- c) To compose a unity of Islamic poets to take the role of the defender from the distortion that by extremists from the whole world and to save the world from committing suicide.

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