



MYTH AND ALLUSIONS IN 'THE WASTE LAND'

Jhanvi Kunal Vora

Visiting Lecturer, Chaudhary Commerce College, Gujarat University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.
Visiting Lecturer, Government Commerce College, Gujarat University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.

ABSTRACT

The title 'The Waste Land' suggest waste means sterile empty and land means the mind of a human. So it shows sterility and absentness of human consciousness. By going deep we have five components like Burial of the dead, A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water, What the Thunder said. In this way we came to know the Mythical background of Waste Land. This poem contributes the spirituality with which Eliot answered to the western dilemma.

KEYWORDS: Pessimism, Modernism, the Waste Land, Transformation, Allusion, Shakespear.

INTRODUCTION:

Thomas Stearns Eliot enjoyed a long life span of more than seventy-five years, and his period of active literary production extended over a period of forty-five years. He has come to be regarded as one of the greatest of English poets, and he has influenced the course of modern poetry more than any other poet of the twentieth century. Hugh Kenner says,

"Yet opinion concerning the most influential man of letters of the twentieth century has not freed itself from a cloud of unknowing"

and therefore the learned author proceeds to call him This 'unknowing' has resulted partly from Mr. Eliot's deliberate mystification-he called himself Old possum and tried to pretend that he was no poet at all and partly from the difficult nature of his writings.

However it may be, the facts of his life are clear and well known. T.S. Eliot was born on 26th September in St. Louis, Missouri, an industrial city in the heart of the United States of America, in 1888; the year, incidentally, in which Matthew Arnold died. He was a man of academic interests and in course of time became the founder of the Washington University at St. Louis and also left behind him a number of religious writings. But the poet's father, Henry Eliot, did not enter the Church. He took the brick-trade at St. Louis in which he was very successful. He married Charlotte Stearns who came directly from Boston when they married. She was an enthusiastic social worker as well as a writer of caliber. In her writings can be seen that keen interest in technical innovations which we find in the poetry of our poet. Thus it is clear that Eliot's grandfather and his mother contributed a lot to his development as a writer, especially as a religious poet. From his father he inherited his business ability which led him to the bank, and later on made him such a successful head of a publishing firm. Mr. Eliot's complex, many-sided personality was the outcome of a number of inherited factors.

Eliot had his school education first at the Smith Academy and then at Milton Academy both in St. Louis. Eliot was at Harvard University from 1906 to 1910 and it was here during this period he came under influences which were to nature mould his literary taste and creative talent. First, there were two eminent scholars and humanist thinkers at Harvard, Irving Babbitt and George Santayana. Eliot as an undergraduate student heard regularly their lectures on Philosophy and aesthetics which he studied. Later, he studied the classics German, French, English Literature and also a course in comparative literature. The life of T.S. Eliot was remarkably devoid of any rebellious elements, and thus it presents a contrast to his Work, both as a poet and a critic, which revolutionized the whole literary taste of his time. It was an uneventful life with no great ups and downs or emotional crises of any kind.

Eliot's Versatility:

T.S. Eliot's period of active literary production covers over forty-five years. During this long period, he wrote poems, plays, literary and social essays, as well as worked as a journalist and editor. He achieved distinction and wielded considerable influence in each of the fields he worked. His writings may, therefore, be studied under three heads, Poetry, Drama and Prose, the later including his literary and social criticism as well as his journalism. Eliot once said that, "a great poet in writing of himself writes his age", and to none is this remark more applicable than to Eliot himself. His "The Waste Land" has been called the epic of the modern age, presenting as it does a panorama of the futility and anarchy that is contemporary civilization.

According to Eliot, rather than losing an authentic interpretation, we actually gain it through distance. We may then apply such a temporal relativism to "The Waste Land" itself, saying that in our perception of Eliot's poem, we have a temporal advantage over the poet, as his time is historical to us today. Remaining on the relationship of past and present, now in Eliot's point in time (1921-22), we may elucidate his ordering device for relating disparate subjective modern experiences to a more coherent past. In this way, subjective and objective perceptions past and present information, different classes, places, and times act as mutual supports, a piling up of equivalent and contrasting metaphors and allegories of the modernist poet's predicament.

However, such a future-oriented approach breaks down into ambiguity and multiple interpretations. Many interpretations choose not to find salvation; others choose to be more positive. The poem leaves these two doors open. In the first place, the interpretations differ in whether the critic wishes to expand upon The Waste Land, if he or she decides to take a personal responsibility for post-modernity's own impotence and sterility, or decides, more academically, simply to decipher a now historical modernity alone. Essentially, when critiquing The Waste Land we must bear this self-willing in mind.

Finally, in introducing "The Waste Land", we must comment upon its structure, and its themes. The structure has been likened to a constellation of stars, spatial as opposed to linear, but this can be misleading, not to mention two-dimensional. Despite what some say, interpreting. The Waste Land does leave a sense of at least partial linear movement. As to the themes of "The Waste Land", there is a lack of thematic clarity, but this, in my view, is Eliot's intention, and at least leaves room for redemption, or it doesn't guarantee it. The lack of clarity may be due to the said ambiguous linear movement and also to the absence of an immediate narrative in the poem's main body, though some clarity may be found in the poem's references to external texts.

The Waste Land has received a great deal of exegetical and explicatory attention over many years and yet continues to be the supreme puzzle poem, in spite of Ian Hamilton's contention to the contrary. However, Hamilton himself acknowledged the fact that 'Eliot' wanted the poem to be difficult and no doubt conceived of its difficulty as an important aspect of its total meaning.' The fact that every year continues to produce its own harvest of Eliot criticism, and that interpretation of the waste land constitutes a substantial portion of it, adding new dimensions of knowledge to our understanding of the poem and its consciousness, is ample justification for us to collate, reassemble and reshape the existing structure of appreciation, interpretation and criticism of the waste land.

The Composition of The Waste Land:

The composition of The Waste Land has a textual history which is ably reflected in *The Waste Land: Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Draft* edited by Valerie Eliot (1971), in *Letters of Ezra Pound* (1950). A Dial Miscellany (1963), *Time of the Dial* (1963), *An Exhibition Of Manuscript and First Editions of TS. Eliot* (1961), T.S. Eliot: *A Biography* (1953), and in the Quinn Collection of the New York Public Library.

The chronology of the composition of the Waste Land, in spite of Valerie Eliot's excellent introduction, is not quite clear and is likely to remain so. Helen Gardner has rightly raised the issue of the 'manuscript' of The Waste Land and asserted that 'we should be careful not to speak of "the first version" or "the original version"'. Her view that the only authentic version of The Waste Land is the published text may not satisfy many Eliot scholars who would like to tracer the ori-

gins of the poem to some of the poem's early drafts written as early as 1914. A short early poem, it appears, provided Eliot with the first line of 'What the Thunder Said'.

Eliot himself has clearly stated that the placed before Ezra Pound 'the manuscript of a sprawling chaotic poem called *The Waste Land* in Paris in 1922' which the Master' reduced to about half its size, in the form in which it appears in print'. Ezra Pound brought his sharp sense of form and poetic acumen to bear upon the rather disconnected manuscript of *The Waste Land*. He made drastic revisions and alterations which would later become the subject matter of a 'specialist' textual study of the poem. In his letter '24 Salurnus, An I' Pound states that the manuscript of *The Waste Land* has been 'much improved' and 'the remaining superfluities 'should be dropped. He says:

The thing now runs from "April..." to "Shantih" without a break. That is 19 pages; and let us say the longest poem in the English language. Don't try to bust all records by prolonging it three pages further. Pound also wrote a witty poem on his role that of a midwife-in the birth of the waste land:

The Waste Land is the most extended example of Eliot's use of the mythical technique. For the modern waste land, Eliot finds several close parallels in the waste land of the past. What is happening today is not peculiar to the present age; it also happened in the past. Whenever, there was perversion of sex, the result was spiritual decay and death. This has been represented symbolically by the picture of a kingdom laid waste by the sexual sin or sickness of its ruler or by war. The land becomes waste, but it is invariably restored to health either by the hero, or by the penance of the ruler himself. Salvation has always come, and so it is bound to come to the modern waste land as well, only if its denizens are prepared to pay the price-sacrifice and suffering. By the use of this technique, the poem is able to bring together several planes of experience, suggest the likeness between them, and increase the richness and allusiveness of his poem.

The Waste Land contains, according to A.G. George,

"a series of emotions and impressions of the poet which are expressed through the objective co-relative of the mythical waste lands, a series of emotions and impressions which originate in the poet's mind as he surveys human life in the present as well as in the past." (Tilak, Raghukul. *The Waste Land and other poems* 52)

Allusion, quotations, and references to past literatures myths and legends, all acquire symbolic significance from Eliot's use of them and throw into sharp relief some one or the other fact of life of the modern, urban civilization. For example, "the unreal city", and the crowds moving across London Bridge in *The Waste Land* are linked up with the city of Baudelaire and with Dante's Limbo and in this way the decadence of contemporary life is emphasized. Stetson's failure at Mylae symbolizes man's eternal spiritual failure. The journey-symbol is frequent in *The Waste Land* and it symbolizes the uprootedness of man in the modern age. 'Coriolanus' is another oft-recurring symbol in Eliot's poetry. it symbolizes variously the Lost Leader, the Lost Father, the Sin of Pride, and isolation and spiritual loneliness. From a study of these book are realized that there is recurrent pattern in various myths thus there is a,

"Basic resemblance between the vegetation myths of the rebirth of the year, the fertility myths of the rebirth of the potency of man, the Christian story of the resurrection, and the Grail legend of purification""(Tilak, Raghukul. *The Waste Land and other poems*. 50.)

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is an important landmark in the history of English poetry and one of the most talked about poems of the 20th century. It is a long poem of about four hundred forty lines in five parts entitled:

- *The Burial of the Dead*
- *A Game of Chess*
- *The Fire Sermon*
- *Death by Water, and*
- *What the Thunder Said.*

It was written during the autumn of 1921, in Lausanne, Switzerland, where the poet was just recovering after a serious breakdown in health, caused by domestic worries and over-work. Personal 'health-crisis, the mental derangement of his wife, who ultimately died in a mental hospital, and the nerve-shattering impact of World War I, all account for the bleak and gloomy picture of the human predicament as presented in the poem, so much so that it has been supposed that the poem expresses the, "disillusionment of a generation". The gloom and despair of the poet are mirrored in the poem.

'The Waste Land': Mythical Background

On the eve of the composition of *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot had been reading Jassie Wetson's book from 'Ritual to Romance', and James Frazer's famous book

The Golden Bough. The poet himself has acknowledged that he was deeply influenced by these works or anthropology, and the ancient and primitive myths and legends which form the mythical background to the poem are derived from these books. Miss Weston's book supplied him with the legend of the Grail and the, Fisher King, and from *The Golden Bough* he derived his knowledge of a number of vegetation and fertility myths and rituals, especially those connected with *Attis, Adonis and Osiris*. These myths are so fundamental to an understanding of the poem-they are the "objective co-relative", for the poet's emotions-that it would be worthwhile to examine in some detail.

The Grail Legend:

The Holy Grail (cup or dish) legend is a medieval legend associated with the adventures of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The Grail was the cup or plate used by Christ for his Last Supper, in which the blood of the Saviour was collected when he was crucified. It was not long before this holy vessel was discovered to have acquired medicinal and miraculous properties so that it became an object of devotion and worship, and chapels for it came to be built in several countries and its worship was organized. The lance used to pierce the sides of Christ was also kept with it. But a time came when the original Grail disappeared mysteriously from the chapel where it was kept and many a bold Knight staked his life and lost in the arduous task of searching for it.

It was generally believed that the lost Grail sometimes appeared in the sky as a floating saucer of great beauty and splendor, but it could be seen only by a Knight of virginal purity. Tennyson treated this theme as theme finale of his *Idylls of the King*, making *Sir Galahad*, the immaculate Knight of King Arthur's Round Table, as the leader destined to succeed in his holy mission. In other version appearing subsequently in Germany and France, however, the searcher or the Quester is *Sir Perceival*, or *Parsifal*. Miss Weston, in her *From Ritual to Romance* has treated the legend critically and historically and has concluded that the Grail was originally connected with the fertility myth, as is witnessed by its sexual symbols (cup and the lance symbolizing the male and female organs respectively), but later on it suffered a sea-change through its association with Christ.

The Fisher King: His Desolate Land

It is said that in the course of their hazardous quest Parsifal, the Quester, and his fellow-adventurers happened to arrive in a country ruled over by a prince named the Fisher King. It was one of the regions where Grail worship had been anciently in vogue, and a temple known as Chapel Perilous, still stood there, broken and dilapidated, as a mournful memorial of what once was, but later had ceased to be. It was said that the lost Grail was hidden in this chapel. At that time the King himself had become a physical wreck, as a result. It was whispered, of a sin committed by his soldiery in outraging the chastity of a group of nuns attached to the Grail chapel.

The impotency of the Fisher King was reflected sympathetically in the land of which he was the head and the ruler. It had become dry and barren, the haunt and home of want and famine. The King, however, was waiting with hope, despite his illness, that one day the Knight of the pure soul would visit his star-crossed kingdom, march to the Chapel Perilous, answer questions and solve riddles. This would be followed by a ritual washing of his, King Fisher's sinful body, which would purge it and renew its health and energy. It was also hoped that this rebirth of the king would be followed by the life-giving rains to the parched land and the thirsty kingdom, which would once more enjoy its earlier fertility.

Eliot's tremendous knowledge of myth, religious 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 and ultimately, ritual fails as the tool for healing the wasteland, even as Eliot presents alternative religious possibilities, including Hindu chants, Buddhist speeches, and pagan ceremonies. Later poems take their images almost exclusively from Christianity, such as the echoes of the Lord's Prayer in "The Hollow Men" and the retelling of the story of the wise men in "Journey of the Magi" (1927).

The mythical method consists in,

"Manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity. The poet goes to ancient myths and legends, and in this way brings out the similarities and contrasts between the past and present. The mythical method is simply a way, of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significances to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Tilak, Raghukul. *The Waste Land and other poems*. 49).

The ancient myths act as objective co-relatives for the poet's emotions, in ancient customs and rituals he finds symbols for his emotions and ideas. The mythical waste land of the Fisher King symbolizes contemporary decay and spiritual sterility. The sick King symbolizes the sick humanity, and this sickness results, as in

the case of the Fisher King from its sexual sins. Sex which is the source of life has been denied its proper function; it has been degraded to mere 'animal copulation', and this sexual perversion has led to spiritual death. Spiritual health can be regained only through penance, suffering and self-discipline.

King Oedipus and His Waste Land:

Tiresias, 'according to Eliot, is the central figure in the poem, an interested spectator of the modern waste land and, what Tiresias sees is the substance of the whole poem. The significance of Tiresias is complex and varied. Historically, he is connected with the story of King Oedipus of Thebes, which is clearly and demonstrably the classical legend of a waste land, with striking resemblances to the drought infested sin-ridden kingdom of the medieval Fisher King.

In this way the introduction of Tiresias serves, in the first place, to complicate the mythical frame of the poem, and in the second place to universalize its central significance by bringing home to us that the sin involved in the violation of the sanctity of sex has in all ages and countries led to decay and degeneration, and the necessity of purifying the sinner's soul through suffering as the sole way to salvation. Oedipus unwittingly kills his father and marries his own mother and thus calls down upon his supposedly innocent head the curse of the gods in the form of a virulent plague, epidemic and destructive, which neither King nor commoner fails to regard as a punishment for some dark and hidden crime. Tiresias, the blind prophet, is summoned and when compelled by the King tells the shocking truth that he the King himself is the plague-spot. Such is the conspiracy of circumstances that the King is slowly, but irresistibly, driven to the realization of this horrible truth. Nothing remains for the king but the duty of expiation. Self-mutilation, self-exile, self-abasement and a prolonged penance, which eventually result in spiritual calm and inner illumination.

Tiresias: Bi-sexual and Prophetic

But the symbolic significance of Tiresias is much greater. Tiresias as represented in *The Waste Land* is bi-sexual; he is blind but has the gift of prophecy and immortality. Various stories are given to account for these characteristics. According to one story this wise the brian soothsayer in his youth once saw the goddess Athena bathing naked in a pond. In great wrath of the goddess struck him blind but since his mother was a friend of hers, she bestowed upon him the gift of prophecy as compensation. According to another story, Tiresias saw two snakes copulating and disturbed them with his stick, and the snakes in wrath transformed him into a woman. Seven years later, he again disturbed another pair of snakes copulating, and was transformed into a man once again. Thus he had experienced both as a man and a woman. Later on, he was questioned by Jove and Juno as to whether Man is more passionate or Woman. He declared that Woman is more passionate. At this Juno was angry and struck him blind, but Zeus and Jove compensated him by conferring upon him the twin gifts of prophecy and immortality.

The biblical Waste land:

We have already noticed two waste lands (1) The waste land of King Fisher, and (2) The waste land of King Oedipus of Thebes. There is a third waste land also the Biblical waste land or evil land of *Emmaus*, mentioned in *Ecclesiastes* and *Ezekiel* parts of the Old Testament. The Prophet *Ezekiel* warns his followers to remember God and give-up idolatry. Their sins have laid the country waste and regeneration will come only when they return to God. 'The dead tree', 'the handful of dust', 'the dry grass', 'the cricket', 'the rack', etc., are all derived from the Biblical imagery of decay and desolation in the parts mentioned above.

Myth: Their re-current pattern

The Waste Land has been criticized by a number of critics as fragmentary, and formless. It has been called a series of poems rather than a single poem. The poet has used a number of devices, to impart unity to his material. Eliot himself acknowledges in his notes to *The Waste Land* that he was profoundly influenced by Miss Weston's book *From Ritual to Romance* and Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. The two authors have analyzed a number of myths and shown that a common, even-recurrent pattern runs through all myths. In the nature-myths there is winter signifying death, and spring signifying re-birth. In the fertility myths, land's fertility is lost (death) in a period of draught and: it returns with rains (life). Thus there is death followed by re-birth. This process of birth and death and re-birth was expressed through numerous vegetation ceremonies and rituals. Thus in Egypt the effigy of the fertility god, Osiris, was stuck with grain all over and was buried. The grain sprouted and this signified the re-birth of the vegetation god. The pattern of birth and re-birth has been spiritualized in Christianity: there is crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection or re-birth to redeem humanity from sin is promised.

Critic after critic has described *The Waste Land* as a very obscure poem. Eliot himself was conscious of the fact and pointed out that poetry should express the intricacy and complexity of life, and hence the poetry in the modern age was bound to be complex. Further, he believed that Poetry which expresses simple thought in a simple manner is no good. His aim was to appeal to the cultured few rather than to the people at large, thus the poem is difficult, and the difficulty is deliberate and intentional on the part of the poet, the difficulty and obscurity in the poem arise from the following reasons:

- (1) The use of novel techniques, like the 'mythical method', is in them-

selves a source of confusion for the readers. The poet has woven into the fabric of the poem at least three waste lands from the past, as well as a number of myths and legends. While the method is a tribute to the poet's skill and erudition, it becomes a stumbling block in the way of the readers who are not equally learned.

- (2) The extreme allusiveness of Eliot's style is another source of difficulty. His allusions have an extraordinary wide range covering several mythologies, literatures and religions; they cover the wisdom and philosophies, both of the East and the West. Sometimes, he uses fragments of quotations, and at other times modifies a quotation to suit his purpose. He thus becomes difficult even for the fairly well educated reader.

The Waste Land as Myth:

Eliot's observations on and his use of myth in modern literature are of primary importance to an understanding of the historical context and significance of *The Waste Land*. The use of myth also highlights a close parallel between the method of James Joyce in *Ulysses* and that of Eliot in *The Waste Land*. Joyce's *Ulysses* was published in Paris in February 1922, while Eliot's *The Waste Land* came out in *The Criterion* (vol.1, no.1) in October 1922. Therefore the two works are not directly related in terms of influence but are close parallels emerging out of kindred minds.

Defended Joyce's method with great perception and power and thus indirectly unraveled the salient features of his own method in *The Waste Land*. He criticized the contemporary antagonism towards *Ulysses* which branded it an incomprehensible and chaotic work, 'an invitation to chaos' and a 'distortion of reality'. Eliot, while emphasizing the classical quality of Joyce's novel, highlights the importance of Joyce's use of the *Odyssey* parallel as a very significant structural device.

While Joyce is panoramic, expansive and comprehensive, Eliot's use of myth is necessarily selective, suggestive and compressed. Eliot also discovered a kindred spirit in the literary concerns of James Frazer. The occasion of the publication in 1922 of the single volume edition (in which 12 volumes were abridged) of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* provided Eliot an opportunity to underscore the great influence that myth, and specially Frazer's exploration of it, had exercised on him and on the literary generations of the twenties. He goes on to explore its parallelisms in Joyce's works and in the musical devices in Stravinsky's rite of spring. His comments on Stravinsky's music are illuminating.

The effect was like *Ulysses* with illustrations by the best contemporary illustrator. The spirit of the music was modern, and the spirit of the ballet was primitive ceremony. The vegetation rite upon which the ballet is founded reminded, in spirit of the music, a pageant of primitive culture. It was interesting for anyone who had read the golden bough and similar works but hardly more than interesting. In art there should be interpenetration and metamorphosis. Even the golden bough can be read in two ways: as collections of entertaining myths or as a revelation of the vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation. In everything is the *Sacre du Printemps*, except in the music, one missed the sense of the present. Whether Stravinsky's music be permanent or ephemeral I do not know; but it did seem to transform the rhythm of the stepper. into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, the beating of iron and steel, the roar of the underground railway, 'and the other barbaric cries of modern life; and to transform these despairing noises in to music.

Eliot highlights the connection between the modern spirit of music, the primitive essence of the ballet, and what he calls 'interpenetration and metamorphoses in the making of art. The whole process breathes the spirit a Walt Whitman's experience in 'crossing Brooklyn ferry' — the continuity between fragments of a vanishing mind and our mind. Stravinsky transforms relics of the past into the sound of modern music. Eliot accomplishes the same task in his poetry, especially in *The Waste Land*.

The Poem Over-Burdened with Allusions:

Critic after critic has described '*The Waste Land*' as a very obscure poem and the chief source of difficulty is the extreme allusiveness of Eliot's style. *The Waste Land* contains several allusions-literary, religious, mythical etc., in which some are obvious, others disguised and still others were obscure. The poem within the space of four hundred and thirty-three lines has quotations, imitations to at least thirty-five different writers who include Buddha, Virgil, Ovid, Dante, St. Augustine, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Ezekiel, Goldsmith, Marvell, Middleton, Milton, Webster, Kyd, Spenser and Shakespeare. Early reviewers reacted adversely to this midley and concluded that Eliot was not a true poet looking directly upon life in order to draw poetic material from it, but a pseudo-poet who draws his material from life through the spectacles of books. The poem was also regarded as "ill-knit, loaded with echo and allusion. Fantastic and crude, obscure and obscurantist".

Allusion to the Indian Religion:

Eliot does not confine himself to Western influences only, but also draws on Indian religion to reinforce his theme in *The Waste Land*. The title of the Section III - *The Fire Sermon* makes a direct reference to the Buddha's fire sermon which he preached against the fires of lust, anger, envy and other passions that consume

men. It also reminds one of the Confessions of St. Augustine wherein he represents lust as a burning cauldron. The Protagonist's prayer at the end of the Section "O Lord Thou pluckest me out" leads on naturally to the next Section in which is indicated the possibility of purification. The various scenes of Section III show us the sterile burning of lust and the references to the Buddha and St. Augustine are intended to show the need of asceticism something to check pressures of desire. The Wisdom of the East and the West comes to the same thing on this point.

Both in the east and the west lust has been condemned as a source of all evil, but the spiritually dead modern humanity knows only lust and no true love. The section is a sermon, but it is a sermon by examples only. The sterile burning of lust is brought out by different sex experiences in the contemporary waste land.

CONCLUSION:

We summed by saying that The Waste Land Eliot has applied the "Mythical method" he admires in Ulysses with brilliant but finally incoherent results. All the fragmentary passages seem to belong to one Voice, recalling memories, meditating, crossing spoken and unspoken thoughts: but the one voice pertains to a multiple personality beyond time and place. He is Tiresias ... But the moral sequence lost in this tangle of myths. In writing "The Waste Land" Eliot was not merely writing a poem of his age but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of his own country and of Europe had a simultaneous existence. Therefore, the poem's allusions can be considered as a way of bringing the whole of literature to bear upon the situation described, giving it a broad climensior. Furthermore, it contributes the spirituality which Eliot felt the answer to the Western dilemma. Thus the overflow of the allusions in 'The Waste Land' allows a smooth and coherent understanding.

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