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## Re reading of the Wasteland through the prism of Marxism

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### **Abstract:**

*Thomas Stearns Eliot is a poet and author from the United States. He was one of the twentieth century's greatest authors and poets. Most of his literary works deal with the post-war years, earning him the Noble Prize in Literature. The Waste Land was published during Europe's post-World War I identity crisis. After mental damage, cynicism and anguished nihilism spread. Under such turmoil, Eliot sought to depict the dystopian world of cruelty and irrationality known as a Utopian world of knowledge and equality. Although Eliot has not written the poem from the perspective of Marxism, it could be possible to read it from the perspective of Marxism. The Marxist approach will help us to know that Conflicts between capitalism's expanding power and the purported inherent rule of socialism have been seen in this poem. This paper will discuss how Wasteland affects the lower class people. The incoherent plots and discussions were intriguing to the lower class. Words like "broken" and "shattered" were part of their regular lexicon. In their everyday lives, people experienced resemblances to these expressions in the guise of ruined houses, crushed hopes, etc. The Marxist notion holds that the aristocracy establishes private-secondary worlds where individuals are self-kings and disengage oneself from society as a whole. The story of Marie and the archduke, Marie's cousin, is presented in the first section, titled "The Burial of the Dead." Even a quick perusal of the text shows that Marie was a member of an aristocratic social group. When we first see that the archduke took just Marie on a sledge, we get a peek at the secret world that she inhabits and the world around her. This contributed to the formation of a private-secondary world around them.*

**Keywords:** Marxism, Hegemony, Capitalism, Power,

### **Introduction:**

Thomas Stearns Eliot, poet, novelist, dramatist, literary critic, and editor, has been acknowledged as one of the greatest recognized authors of the second decade of the 20th century, and he is a key player in the in English Contemporary poetry. Raised in St. Louis, Missouri, to an affluent Boston Brahmin family, he stayed, employed, and tied the knot in England aged 25 in 1914. At 39, he imparted up his American citizenship and obtained a British citizen in 1927 (Sanna 3). Eliot immediately got recognize worldwide in 1915 with a publication of the work "*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*," perceived provocative at that time. *The Waste Land* (1922), *The Hollow Men*

(1925), *Ash Wednesday* (1930), and *Four Quartets* represent some of his most significant writings. He was also famous for 7 plays, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) and *The Cocktail Party*, arguably the most significant. He received the 1948 Nobel in Literature "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry"(Nobel Foundation).

T.S. Eliot, an American by birth and an Englishman by adoption, finished the first proposal of *The Wasteland* in the fall of 1921. He then showed the manuscript to Ezra Pound, who proposed several changes to the poem's structure, including the removal of Gerontion as a prelude to *The Wasteland*, the retention of the section 'Death by Water', and the deletion of nearly half of the lines. The poem's disjointedness and opacity may be traced back to Eliot's adherence to Ezra Pound's recommendations. Symbolism, Imagism, Dante, and Eastern philosophy impacted Eliot, who preached Buddhist renunciation while dressing as a Christian.

The Violent World Wars of the 20th century incinerated everything conventional and decent, and T.S. Eliot is one of those authors who wrote against this backdrop. Lack of spirituality was the most dangerous effect of those conflicts. Under this circumstance, several artists adopted a variety of roles in order to create their works. As Samuel Beckett argued in his Thesis of Absurd Theatre, there is no point in trying to make sense of this hostile and incomprehensible reality. When Hemingway lost his trust in God, he became an atheist. Like Plato's advice, if a man has no God, he should construct his own; he encouraged his books' protagonists to choose an ambitious aim for themselves and devote themselves wholeheartedly to reaching it.

The German playwright, Bertolt Brecht of the previous century, had his response to the post-war environment. In his view, a capitalist system that dehumanized everyone was the root of today's issues. In this way, T. S. Eliot has a unique perspective. He thinks contemporary civilization, which represents absolute worldliness and sensual culture, mirrors hell for man. Detachment from spirituality has led to a routine, lifeless, uninteresting, miserable lifestyle. This phenomenon is abundant in his well-known poem *The Waste Land*. Though Eliot has not written this poem from the perspective of Marxism, it could be possible to read through the prism of Marxism.

*The Waste Land* is a forceful indictment of how society is becoming more fragmented in structure, style, and substance. The poem was created during a period of considerable turmoil. It depicts the psychological and sociological implications of societal breakdown, as well as the physical ones. Most Marxists anticipated the proletariat to initiate a revolution based on the social constructionist "top-down" paradigm; however, this did not occur. Instead, the ravages of war and the subsequent emergence of dictatorship ended utopian illusions and compelled people to search for deeper truths. The poem does not suggest solutions to societal problems, but its combination of words and visuals makes it clear that conventional Marxist perspectives must be reconsidered immediately. The poem depicts how desperate humans may become at moments of emergency while

civilization is at its snapping point. Eliot injected multiple layers into this poem and numerous references to conventional literature. To do this, he combines elements from several literary and historical lineages with sights and sounds from current society.

### **The Wasteland and Marxism:**

T.S. Eliot had astounding confidence in the heritage of the poet and in poetry as a tool to rejuvenate the past, transform the manner people think, and support build a brighter tomorrow. In his own work on literature, he observed, "The writer in our society as it has evolved has to be strong."(Eliot 50). He who was ready to critically examine his own work and clarify what he had reflected it was the poet's dedication to mankind as a whole. In *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot uses the dramatic effect of being "on the outside looking in" and separated from society to depict how difficult and dismal life can be. After the First World War in the twentieth century, T.S. Eliot penned "*The Wasteland*." Capitalism evolved at a rapid pace during the span of the century. There were two kinds of inhabitants in society: those who controlled the means for manufacturing as well as those who executed the work. In the end, there were those who had money and those who didn't. A large number of subservient classes were typically ruled by a small number of dominating classes. Eliot also focused on this subject in his writing, which he used to show how things are now.

Marxism as a theory of knowledge could discern the distinction between the apparent and concealed parts of a poem or novel. Then it may relate the story's motif to major Marxist ideas, such as the way society is segmented into classes, how capitalism has evolved throughout history, and how literary form itself is made. In the words of Birch, "a Marxist position grounds social reality in a history, struggles centered upon class and systems of production, reflecting at any given moment a dialectical relationship between history and society." There are many methods for looking at modern poetry like "*The Wasteland*" we can also analyze it from a Marxist perspective. Marxism holds that the literature in question reflects social organizations from which it originates and is itself a theoretical instrument to advance class interests. It also demonstrates how much the literary texts are an outcome of the time period in which they were written (Bertens.)

The framework of "*The Wasteland*" resembles to a work of prose. The metaphors of the brown fog at noon in the winter, the crowds of people strolling, the fading plant, the cracked images, the barman, the filthy spouse (Lil), the military hero (Albert), the rat crawling through the plants, Mrs Porter and her daughter, the typist girl, the tiny home agent's clerk and so on appeal to the weaker class because they are the ones who use these keywords almost every day. Despite their illogic, the themes were quickly recognised by the working class.

The poem's chaotic voice encapsulates Marxist ideas of "alienation" and "species being." Eliot's representation of societal ideals and their dissolution challenges the reader to re-assess intellectual dialogue. Hegel and Feuerbach consider alienation as a conceptual, false assumption that

causes it. Karl Marx sees it as material as well as social. His "Alienation" Hypothesis describes estrangement as the separation of intrinsically connected individuals or objects. This also explains why people, organizations, and things are in harmony, their location, and the effects of conflict. He says capitalists push employees to sell their strength, power, knowledge, and talents. So, workers have little influence on their work or its outcome. This became a capitalist tool instead; hence, they became estranged. These situations alienated workers from themselves, others, and their work.

Marx considers man a Working Species (animal laborans), and the workforce differentiates man. Production is a constant need for human life and a perpetual feature of humanity. However, when a man makes a thing through his work, that object is at loggerhead with him. The producer anymore retains ownership over the object he produced. He continues to generate, and the world of his creations surrounds him like an alien and dangerous atmosphere. Thus there is this kind of link between the Manufacturer and the objects Formed, in addition to the galaxy of stuff that surrounds them. Marx writes in his 1844 "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" that "man is a species being....and free conscious action comprises man's species-character" (Wartenberg 77), which is a central notion in his writings. Eliot's theme opening statement reveals his view that society is in crisis:

April is the cruellest month, breeding

.....

Dull roots with spring rain.

(Eliot 31)

Eliot confuses our views about resurrection and regeneration, which are normally associated with April, by replicating Chaucer's prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* and depicting nature as a patient being drugged on a bed (almost like an autopsy). It has a medically lifeless tone that creates a sense of ineffectiveness, and we feel distant, bewildered, and devoid of trust in the once-promising notions of revolution from the first line.

Accordingly, the poem may be fused with another Marxist theory that asserts aristocracy develops a private space around itself in which every individual of an elite ruling class becomes self-king and separates themselves from society.

Under capitalism, social space has the same properties as a commodity since it becomes a thing that conceals the order of social relations. In general, Lefebvre understands social space as a social product that exists in any mode of production as the basis for human biological reproduction and reproduction of labour force and production relations (Lefebvre 31-32)

Marx outlined four methods that workers feel excluded in capitalist society:

- (1) From his efforts to create something which becomes "an alien object that has power over him"?
- (2) In his work, which he considers to be "directed against himself," as if it "does not belong to him."

(3) From "man's species being," which turns alien to him"; and

4) In connection to other humans, as well as to their work and the aim their labour (Marx136-152)

The phrase "a being alien to him" appears unknowingly in T.S. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*. The majority of society's spokesmen are elites who like their isolated. Their way of life and conduct set them apart from contemporary society. Marx accurately said that it is stamped with the birthmarks from the past civilization from whose conception it grows (Marx). Apart from the type girl event, Eliot seldom references people with poor finances. The archduke accompanied only Marie on a sledge, displaying her private life. "In the highlands, there you feel free," says Marie (Eliot), implying that she does not feel free elsewhere. In other words, Marie, like many others in their wastelands, feels imprisoned. Janos Kornai, a Hungarian economist, is typical: The classical socialist framework is an unified framework... Capitalism is a cohesive system... nevertheless; it induces an inconsistent system... The supremacy of governmental ownership and market operation are incompatible (Kornai). In line 19, Eliot depicts the bleak zone that characterizes contemporary society. The poet wants to know

“What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish?” (Eliot)

Eliot calls the reader "Son of man" throughout the section and quotes a biblical scripture. "A heap of shattered pictures" and "the dead tree affords no cover" are all the reader understands; thus the poet tells them they "cannot explain, or assume" what the bare ground's roots are. Pictures like this portray a barren countryside. Marie did not visit the archduke alone. As the line

"And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,  
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. (Eliot)

Shows there were others. Second, Marie reads at night and avoids others. This enables her create a private-secondary universe.

The poet paints a vivid picture of Lady MrsEquitone's bedroom in the second portion, "A Game of Chess," via exquisite lines. Eliot paints a beautiful vision of a wealthy lady sitting in a chair "like a burnished throne" in the opening words of the section. There are also "standards wrought with fruited vines," "seven branched candelabra," and "jewels" throughout the image. "Satin cases poured in rich profusion;" are on the woman's table. These containers contain "strange synthetic perfumes." Aphrodisiacs are synthetic drugs intended to induce or increase sexual desire. Because sex is tied to birth and, consequently, fertility, the need for aphrodisiacs is revealed. Above the fireplace in this room is a picture of "Philomel," a reference to a classical lady who was raped by "the barbarian monarch" Tereus. The walls, according to Eliot, depict "other withered stumps of time," or historical figures. Then he launches into a series of unusual segments, the first of which is a desperate plea to

her partner by the woman in the room. "My nerves are severe tonight," she grows, encouraging visitors to "stay with me." She also inquires of how he thinks and repeats the word "think" in question and assertion form multiple times before ending with a one-word expression, "Think." Eliot's repeated emphasis on the word "think," as well as the fact that he puts it out on its own, indicate that he is aiming to persuade his readers to consider the contemporary wasteland. Her gorgeous furniture, dazzling lighting, and deep smells provide a backdrop that proudly declares her aristocratic rank.

In stark contrast to this, the third portion, titled "The Fire Sermon," is a description of the chamber in which the typewriter girl works. As shown by the exquisite language, her stove, drying combos, socks, slippers and camisoles represent her background in an appealing socioeconomic status "Her stove, and lays out food in tins/.....Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays." (Eliot) The décor in this chamber differs from that of Lady MrsEquitone's own space. In the poem, Lady MrsEquitone and the typist girl are visited by their lovers. Apart from a short interaction, nothing happens between Lady MrsEquitone and her boyfriend, as shown by the words "My nerves are bad tonight." Yes, it's awful. "Stay with me./ Contact me."

Furthermore, they are playing chess while we close our eyes and wait for the bell to be rung. Conversely, there is no interaction between the typewriter girl and her lover, and they have an intimate relationship, as shown by these lines. His emphasis on the word "think" and the reality that he puts it out on its own show that he is attempting to compel his readers to consider the modern wasteland. Her gorgeous furniture, dazzling lighting, and deep smells provide a backdrop that proudly declares her aristocratic rank.

"His vanity requires no response,  
And makes a welcome of indifference (Eliot)"

Though unconsciously for readers, the poet safeguards Lady MrsEquitone's secret Inner world and abstinence. An entry into the typing girl's 'private' world, on the other hand, undermines the status of her surroundings as 'public' and her as a 'whore,' since an intruder by the outside was undoubtedly never imaginable. Her identity as a prostitute has been implicitly expressed by the poet, whose critique of her behaviour of demonstrating closeness with her boyfriend as mechanical is evident in the text.

The poet recalls Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester's sailing in the Section "The Fire Sermon." As noticed by the contours, the grandeur of the boat's décor and the majesty of the Thames furnish them with an inner parallel world. While Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester are engrossed in their boating expedition, it is notable that not one individual nor an one vessel can be seen. This aided in the formation of an inner parallel milieu around them. There is a major distinction between MrEugenides and Mr Sweeney in "The Fire Sermon," just as there is between Mr Sweeney

and MrEugenides in "The Fire Sermon." Despite being a Smyrna businessman, MrEugenides' demotic French conversation with Tiresias provides sufficient proof for his membership in an aristocratic class.

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