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## T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*: Anticlimax of Modern Life in a Claustrophobic World

**Abu Sufian**

Master in English Literary Studies  
Department of English Language and Literature  
International Islamic University Malaysia  
Kuala Lumpur

### **Abstract:**

The postwar disillusionment of the 1920s led many literary figures to voice out the predicament and moral dilemma that modern life faces. Of many poets of war, T.S. Eliot is a distinguished figure and a leading voice in picturing the crises of the time known as 'age of worry'. His groundbreaking poem, *The Waste Land* (1922) appears like an earthquake and deconstructs the structure of modernism and everything it offered. It portrays a claustrophobic world where regeneration and hopefulness seem far-fetched. This 'disease of the age' becomes the core issue of the poem. Eliot follows the 'mythical method' in the poem and connects existing panoramic setbacks of modern life to antiquities. Thus, it implies a reproachful question on modernism. Exposing a picture of mundane wasteland that symbolically suggests the spiritual death of modern men, Eliot ties the malaise with the eternal human problem and looks East for a possible remedy.

**Keywords:** age of worry, claustrophobic world, postwar disillusionment, T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

### **Introduction**

*The Waste Land* (1922) can arguably be regarded as the giant literary figure of twentieth-century English literature T. S. Eliot's most significant work. This poem is universally viewed as one of the influential works of modernist literature, and in this classic poem Eliot incorporates many isolated, esoteric references to history, religion, literature, mythology, and other school of thoughts. Because of this comprehensiveness and all-inclusive tendency of Eliot, the 434-line poem became famous, and he as a poet received rave reviews and wider popularity. The Poem first appeared in 1922 in the London-based literary magazine named *The Criterion*, and then in the US-based literary magazine, *The Dial* in November same year. The poem has been given so much importance that the title of it is generally italicized, though it is not an epic. After the publication of *The Waste Land*, Eliot's remark on the poem tells us its gravity as a poem of all time as he states "I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found. ...In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity..." (Eliot qtd. in Bhagawati 337).

Eliot as a modern poet can be singled out without difficulty as his themes and subject-matters of literary works depict modern times and its crises in a convincingly atypical way. The modern lives' worries became important elements of literature in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Eliot leads the way as being the "worry's first poet" (O'Gorman 1001). He expresses 'the worries' of modern times boldly, and makes a psychological journey of the human mind "to find significant meaning in this mental experience and to integrate it into acts of human moral choice and vision" (O'Gorman 1001). In *The Waste Land*, Eliot connects the contemporary tensions with the past, referring to some well-known mythical elements from both the East and West. He illustrates the catastrophes as having timeless belongings and demonstrates the "contemporary malaise into an eternal problem of man" (Bhagawati 337).

*The Waste Land* brings in some serious issues associated with modern human lives, in a very atypical way. The deadly skull, drawbacks, emptiness and futility of the ‘modern life’ have been portrayed in this poem very convincingly and successfully. Eliot used the technique of ‘fragmentation’ to show that our modern life is fragmented and scattered like his poem. The title clearly suggests that the poem is certainly not about a romantic or fantasy kingdom, rather it hints a ‘waste land’, an unproductive, lifeless, and waterless place that symbolizes modern Europe by referring to London city. Besides, these disillusionments have been connected to the past and also with the future; the poem links its correlation with the past by referring to mythical elements and with the future by its vision. Thus, here in this poem, “...past and the present merge together and antiquity is brought into the embrace of contemporaneity, so that a poem of four hundred thirty lines acquires a disillusionment in the cultural history of the entire human nation.” (Bhagawati 337).

Eliot’s depiction of modern life’s vacuity is easily understandable if we can picture the time when it was written, the post-World War I. At a time when traditional stabilities of society, religion, and culture seemed to have crashed dramatically in the hands of ‘rapid change’ of both social and technological in every sphere of human lives. Modernity destroyed the old order of any kind, be it social, ethical or religious; thus made people to doubt on the previously established assumption of self, divine, world and so on:

By the dawn of the twentieth century, traditional stabilities of society, religion, and culture seemed to have weakened, the pace of change to be accelerating. The unsettling force of modernity profoundly challenged traditional ways of structuring and making sense of human experience. Because of the rapid pace of social and technological change, because of the mass dislocation of populations by war, empire, and economic migration; and because of the mixing in close quarters of cultures and classes in rapidly expanding cities, modernity disrupted the old order, upended ethical and social codes, cast into doubt previously stable assumptions about self, community, the world, and the divine. (Norton, 2013: 2369)

The poem is divided into five sections, and each section displays a bizarre, mundane and futile modern life symbolically, where sometimes we have found direct references to real city (London) and sometime through rhetorical suggestion. As we explore through the poem, the mundane and vain modern life’s imagery become evident. Starting with the section titled "The Burial of the Dead" that represents a physical wasteland and the buried human consciousness that was compared to a corpse hidden in April, “the cruellest month”, Eliot continues till section five entitled "What the Thunder Said" to search out a possible solution to the problem that modern life is affected with. During the journey up to section five, we have been introduced with some grave predicaments of our modern life including ignorance, sexual abuse, lust, hypocrisy, hyper-reality, the vain purpose of life, and so on.

However, Eliot presents the mundane life of London, often depicting physical or bodily set-up. Actually, symbolically it goes beyond bodily portrayal and reaches the soul. Lockerd asserts this as: “In other words, the corruption that pervades Eliot's vision goes beyond bodily corruption, though it often manifests itself in the bodies of the citizens of London.” (10). Thus, this poem became a voice like the works of Rupert Brooke (1887—1915) and Oscar Wilde (1854—1900), and puts the modern calamities into words extraordinarily. Lockerd goes on to delineate;

I harbor no delusions about Eliot as a saint whose poetry transforms the decadent bodies of Wilde and Brooke into a perfectly balanced vision of sweetness and light. *The Waste Land* is not a happy poem. It is riddled with the same unsettling sexual, political, and racial anxieties that tortured Rupert Brooke. (9)

It goes without saying that *The Waste Land* conveys the message that we, the modern people, are suffering from severe setbacks despite having up-to-the-minute technology, and everything that modernism brings in our life. While many other literary figures upheld, celebrated and worshipped this modern way of life, Eliot came up with *The Waste Land* and proved his candid being as a true poet, revealing the hidden crises of modern life. This paper makes an attempt to bring in the issues related to the poem and modern problems, establishing a link between modernism and Eliot's vision in this charismatically constructed poem.

In this poem, Eliot's outcry for London and its people is like one of a prophet who is worried of saving his community from hellfire. He adores London more than anything else around him; university, arts, and so on. In one of his private letters, written to his friend Conrad Aiken in 1914, he states: "I hate university towns and university people, who are the same everywhere, with pregnant wives, sprawling children, many books and hideous pictures on the walls... Oxford is very pretty, but I don't like to be dead." (Eliot qtd. in Sharma 9). The poet was also inspired by his first wife Vivienne Haigh-Wood Eliot (1888–1947) in composing the poem. In a private paper written in his sixties, Eliot confesses the fact that his muse behind *The Waste Land* is her wife. In a private paper written in his sixties, he said:

I believe that I came to persuade myself that I was in love with her simply because I wanted to burn my boats and commit myself to staying in England. And she persuaded herself (also under the influence of Pound) that she would save the poet by keeping him in England. ...To her, the marriage brought no happiness. ...To me, it brought the state of mind out of which came *The Waste Land*. (Eliot qtd. in Miller 220)

The poem deals with the catastrophes that Europe faced after World War I, depicting a horrifying and disturbing image of Europe like Joseph Conrad's "The horror! The Horror", the breathtaking line in *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Eliot's portrayal of decadence in London suggests a change; a terrifying change that is like an interruption of the civilization of thousand years in Europe. The change is 'modernism', a force that 'revolutionizes' every sphere of human lives, but it renders "spiritual darkness in the modern age" and "state of spiritual degeneration" (Sing 46).

### **Five Sections: A Synopsis of Moral and Spiritual Decadence of Modern Life**

The poem has been divided into five (5) sections; each of the section possesses different title. The first section named 'The Burial of the Dead' depicts a wasteland and portrays the futility of modern life and its consciousness as buried. The second section entitled 'A Game of Chess' where we experience sexual abuse and lifeless relationship between lover and beloved, similarly, between husband and wife. This section brings in two poles apart scenario to show the sexual failure. The first one deals with upper class modern carnal love, while the other one depicts lower middle class or working class' problem in terms of sexual relationship between married couples. The third section titled 'The Fire Sermon' that mainly displays human lust and desire for sex. We have seen the prostitution just right over the Thames River in this section. Eliot suggests that London city is burning out of lust and desire.

The fourth section entitled 'Death by Water' demonstrates the idea of never-escaping death. The fifth and final section titled 'What the Thunder Said' which seeks for a possible solution to the troubles addressed throughout the four previous sections.

Eliot moves on to Eastern religion to cure the crises. Overall, the poem holds "...theme of barrenness, decay and death, and the quest for life and resurrection which he found in these anthropological sources with the Christian story and with Buddhist and other oriental analogies, and incorporating into the poem both examples and symbols of the failure of modern civilization, moral squalor and social vacuum -" (Bhagawati 337). Apart from this, Eliot's wasteland depicts an emblematic land which refers to spiritual wasteland rather than a literal one. As it is put in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*:

The Postwar disillusion of the 1920s was, it might be said, a spiritual matter, just as Eliot's Waste Land was a spiritual and not a literal wasteland. Depression and unemployment in the early 1930s, followed by the rise of Hitler and the cruel shadow of Fascism and Nazism over Europe, with its threat of another war, represented another sort of wasteland that produced another sort of effect on poets and novelists. (Norton 1685)

This will further be clarified in the following discussion of five sections of the *The Waste Land*.

### **The Burial of the Dead**

According to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2013), "The title comes from the Anglican burial service" (Norton 2714). As the title indicates, the first section is mainly about death and resurrection. This section begins with, "April is the cruellest month," which is one of the most mentioned lines in by the critics and most important reference in the poem. This line is familiar with Chaucer's poem *The Canterbury Tales* (1475): "Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote". However, Eliot's introductory line is very pessimistic and conveys hopelessness, where Chaucer's introductory line –from the prologue–is optimistic about the month of April and its regenerative capability that awakens the dead soul and inserts life to dead nature. Undoubtedly, Eliot's pessimistic start and claiming April as 'the cruellest month' notify the reader that he is about to begin a dark poem.

Throughout the rest of the first section, as he will do with the other four sections, Eliot shifts among several disengaged fragmented thoughts, speeches, symbols and images. The first seven lines use images of spring, such as "breeding / Lilacs," "Dull roots with spring rain.", and "sunlight". In line 8, Eliot tells the reader "Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee/ With a shower of rain;". It clearly suggests that the time (season) has been shifting from spring to summer.

Noticeably, the mood of the poem changed when we come up to line 19. In line 19, the poet starts providing us some visual images about the wasteland of modern society. Eliot questions; "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" (L. 19-20). To answer the questions, Eliot then refers to a biblical passage, addressing the reader as "Son of man." Eliot is not sure about the "heap of broken images" and their whereabouts. He is informing the reader that he "cannot say, or guess" what the roots of this wasteland are; because, the readers are only introduced to a place which is completely barren,

dead, unproductive and lifeless. Eliot makes use of very strong images and symbols to portray a dead land, which symbolically suggests the real wasteland of modern society.

Dramatically, the poet says in line 27, "I will show you something different." Then he invites the reader to join on a journey with the poet, which will be like a tour of this modern real wasteland. In line 43, we have been introduced to Madame Sosostriis who is considered "the wisest woman in Europe" (L. 45). The name, Madame Sosostriis is taken from "Aldous Huxley's novel *Crome Yellow* [1921] who dresses up as a gypsy to tell fortunes at a fair" (Norton, 2013: 2715). Eliot brings in this issue to show how superstitious, ignorant and backward the people of London were who believe in a fortune-teller blindly.

At the very end of the section, Eliot talks about a "corpse" that is hidden beneath the garden-soil; he is worried whether somehow it comes out or "sprout". He is asking; "That corpse you planted last year in your garden,/ "Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (L. 71-72). Indeed the corpse here represents consciousness and wisdom, which has been hidden under all these idiocies and superstitious beliefs of modern people.

### **A Game of Chess**

In this section, Eliot changes his attention from death to sex. The Title has been taken from Thomas Middleton's (1580-1627) two plays *A Game at Chess* (staged in 1624 but published in 1840) & *Women Beware Women* (1657). *Women Beware Women* has a scene in which mother-in-law is distracted by a game of chess while her daughter in law is seduced (Norton, 2013: 2716). At the very outset of the section, Eliot portrays a luxuriant image of a wealthy woman, who sits in a chair "like a burnished throne." The scene also includes "standards wrought with fruited vines," a "sevenbranched candelabra," and "jewels" (L. 79-84). All these luxury imageries prove the aristocratic belongings of the lady. In spite of having all the comfort, she is suffering from neurotic psychological disorder. She is ignorant of what she has done, what she is doing and what she will do tomorrow. She asks, "'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'" (L. 131). Then she continues to speak out her neurotic problem by saying, "'With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?/ "What shall we ever do?'" (L. 133-134).

The next passage switches its focus from idle upper class to the dirt lower class or working class. This scene, which carries on till the end of the section, focuses on Lil and her husband Albert who had just been "demobbed," or dismissed from the army. Lil was having a discussion with one of her friends, who is advising her to be smarter. Her friend goes on to say, "make yourself a bit smart./ He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you" (L. 142-43). During the conversation, the line "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" suggests the last call from the pub to warn them it is time to close the pub or bar. Lil's husband has been in the army for around four years; so, he will now expect to have an entertaining (physical) time from her. Lil's friend suggests her that Albert "wants a good time," and if Lil fails to do so, "there's others will". Lil already has lost her charm, because she has had five children. Moreover, she takes pill to control birth, and this makes her weaker; consequently, she has lost her teeth and glow of face. Through this scene, Eliot tries to show that sex, in modern time, becomes loveless; and this is true for both the rich and poor societies.

### **The Fire Sermon**

This section is mainly about the lust and sexual abuse. The title has been taken from Buddha's teaching (sermon): he taught "Fire Sermon" to his followers to guard themselves

from “the fires of lust and other passions that destroy people and prevent their regeneration” (Norton, 2013: 2719). Eliot’s depicts a scenario of lust and shows that London city is burning out of sexual desire. During the summer night, the “The nymphs”, prostitutes come in the Thames River. After satisfying their customers, they leave without leaving a single sign of their crime. Because the river takes away all the “testimony of summer nights” that includes “empty bottles,” “Silk handkerchiefs,” or “cigarette ends,” and so on, it is not possible to trace out the crime next morning.

Following this interval, Eliot introduces the character of Tiresias, a mythological, prophetic figure who was turned into a hermaphrodite that indicated by the phrases “throbbing between two / lives” and “Old man with wrinkled female breasts.” (L. 219) Tiresias experienced both male and female sex in his lifetime. So, he is sharing the experiences she gathered. However, we have also noticed that the “The nymphs” are also being raped many times. This clearly demonstrates the abuse at the heart of London city in a summer night. This section ends with the word, “burning.” This one word line refers to the Buddhist sermon that gives the section its title, and which conveys the message that London is burning out of brutal sexual desire, so does the whole Europe.

### **Death by Water**

The concise fourth section, the shortest of all five sections, starts with a reference to “Phlebas the Phoenician,” who was the dead sailor, mentioned in the second section. Once again, Eliot is concerned about death. In this section, he provides a brief image of the sailor’s body being torn apart by the sea: “A current under sea / Picked his bones in whispers.” (L. 315-16). This section finishes off warning the reader to “Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.” This suggests that whoever you are, famous or unknown, death will meet you unmistakably.

### **What the Thunder Said**

The poem’s fifth and final section constructs on the descriptions of death and sterility. The only difference with this section and other four sections is; it attempts to offer hope and seeks for a possible solution or cure to these modern crises. Eliot demonstrates that these problems can be overcome. The section starts with an extensive discussion of Jesus Christ, saying that “He who was living is now dead,/ We who were living are now dying/ With a little patience” (L. 328-30). Then Eliot repeats the moral corruption of modern time. To show the vice, Eliot follows this image with a list of historical cities that were ruined and decayed: “Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London.” By including London at the very end of this list, Eliot entails that the modern cities are about to fall down or decay like other cities before.

Though it begins with Jesus, Eliot does not rely on Christianity to cure the crisis; rather he goes to Eastern Hinduism and Buddhism to attain a possible cure. Eliot brings in the scene from Hindu’s Holy Scripture *Upanishad* where the “Thunder” replies with three ‘DA’, when it was asked questions on how to resolve crisis. The first ‘DA’ refers to ‘Datta’ which means ‘to give’. It teaches that we need to sacrifice and give away whatever belongings we have to the needy. The second ‘DA’ refers to ‘Dayadhvam’, meaning ‘to sympathize’. This advises to be kind and sympathize for the creation, the humankind and to everything. The final ‘DA’ refers to ‘Damyata’ meaning ‘to control’. ‘Control’ here counsels us to control our lust and desire (sexual). If these three advice can be followed, according to *The Waste Land*, we will be able to overcome the modern crises that have infected our life. The final line of *The Waste Land* consists of the same words repeated for three times, “Shantih shantih shantih,” which means ‘peace’ which is “a formal ending to an Upanishad” (Norton, 2013:

2727). Eliot may propose that following three 'DA', humanity will restore its previous vitality and liveliness.

### **Lifelessness and Futility of the Modern Life in *The Waste Land***

The poem displays the disillusionment, hopelessness, failure and cynicism of modern life. Throughout the poem, we have experienced the same failure in different mood and situation. Loss of faith is one of the worst features that modern life is bearing in its heart. This is why the poet looks forward to seeing another regeneration of modern lives: "In light of the desolation of the West, Eliot feels that another renaissance is necessary; the preceding one tore Western society from its root, the Christian religion." (Hentea 317-18). Eliot strives for unfolding the predicaments and having a solution to them. *The Waste Land* is an expedition of "human failure and of perennial quest for salvation" (Bhagawati 337). Below is a brief description of these crises that prevails the poem.

### **Background of the Crisis**

When Eliot published *The Waste Land* in 1922, it was generally acknowledged as reflecting the cynicism in Europe following World War I (1914-1918). During the war that officially ended in 1918, approximately twenty million people lost their lives and immeasurable amount of people wounded (Einolf 114). Consequently, for the generation of men and women who came across the horrible experience of the war and started living a new life after the war, it was not easy to start for them. Life seemed bleak, and many of these young men and women became highly disappointed and unpromising about their own futures and the sanctity of humanity. While this entire group was coined as the 'Lost Generation', most critics today associate this term with a group of American writers who translated their disillusionment into a social protest, and in the process produced some of the greatest works of twentieth century literature. *The Waste Land* is one of the masterpieces that brings in the issues—the disillusionment, hopelessness and outcry of people after the war. Many critics believe that through this poem, modernism actually begins. As Peter Childs acknowledges:

The year 1922, when Marsh's final Georgian anthology appeared (with no poem that mentions the war), was the year that modernism arrived decisively in English poetry with the publication of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, as it also did in English fiction with the book publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. (62-63)

### **Disillusionment**

There are serious catastrophes of modern life that have been brought in *The Waste Land*. Among them, the first crisis would be counted as 'loss of consciousness and wisdom'. In the first section of the poem, 'The Burial of the Dead', we have noticed how people are loosed upon ignorance by depending on fortune-teller, 'Madame Sosostris'. And the ending part of the section, though symbolically, we have observed the 'corpse' are buried. Corpse here represents human wisdom that is no more visible. The consciousness does not see light because of ignorance and foolishness.

Eliot's indication is the current state of affairs in modern society of the post-World War I Europe. He points out this pervasive sense of cynicism in a number of ways; the most notable the disillusionment is incapability to live a happy life. In the first section, we have seen that in the London Bridge, there is a crowd of busy office-going people who have no time to even look at each other. Their unhappiness becomes evident when, "Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,/ And each man fixed his eyes before his feet." (L. 64-65).

The second section, 'A Game of Chess' has also depicted sexual disorder. Both upper and lower classes share the same dilemma concerning physical relationship. Loveless attachment between lover and beloved makes the situation worse. On one hand, the upper class lady, suffering from neurotic problem, says "'My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me./ "Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak." (L. 111-12) On the other hand, the lower class housewife is a victim of joyless and robotic sexual target of her husband. The housewife, Lil, is completely broken down psychologically when she got to know that her husband is coming back home after four years from the army. She is pushed by her friend to be ready for making love, while she is tired of having children and getting older unusually because of taking birth-controlling pills. Lil's condition noticeably comes out when we see that "She's had five already, and nearly died of young George."(L. 160). These sexual disillusionments in both the classes have been effectively portrayed in the poem. Thus, the poem placing this sexual failure and depicting disturbing images of modern society has presented "degeneration and perversion being a symptom of spiritual decline" (Bhagawati 338).

### **Corruption and Sin**

Modern life is stained and corrupted in every sphere due to rejecting long-standing social and religious norms. This issue is also one of the major crises that Eliot focuses. In the section three, 'The Fire Sermon', we have seen the poet lamenting for his people like a prophet when his followers go astray. The sanctity of modern life has been taken away by the river-wave in every summer night, when the "The nymphs are departed". And the poet, sings a sad song and cries out loud, "By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . ./ Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,/ Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long." (L. 182-84). There is a description of open prostitution right over the Thames River. Every summer night there is preparation for prostitution on the boat, discarding all human values, they involve in robotic sexual game. River helps them to be sinless and being innocent as it washes all the testimony of the sinned summer nights. As Eliot puts;

The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,  
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends  
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed. (L. 177-79)

This is how the sin and corruption of modern life go on and on without interruption. This makes the poet sad and renders the poet to weep like a prophet just beside the river for his community. Eliot and other poets of the 'age of worry' attempts to confront the predicaments of modern times, but their endeavors have not been fully successful due to the unfaltering confidence of people on 'High modernism' and the life-style it offers, as Hentea argues, "...we have personal poetry and personal criticism left to fester in an increasingly valueless society, all that Eliot tried to reform but could not." (306).

### **Seeking for Solution**

After revealing all the vices and crises of modern life, Eliot goes on to seek for a possible solution to the problems. He depends on the Eastern religions, specifically Hinduism, to bring in a doable formula to cure the modern disease. Peter Childs adds:

It paints a picture of a barren Western world of sexual and regenerative incapacity – and hence Eliot turns to Eastern religion, to the Hindu philosophy of

the Vedas, for his final Sanskrit pronouncements of Datta, Dayadhvam, Damayata: give, sympathise, control. (75)

This statement says that the only possible solution is; we need to restore the lost values, particularly religious, to encounter the problem. In the final section of the poem, Eliot depicts a physical wasteland that is lifeless, empty and scary. He says; “Here is no water but only rock/ Rock and no water and the sandy road” (L. 331-32). Other than presenting the malaise, Eliot attempts to gain a formula “to find a way out of modern man’s predicament” (Maleki, Mirzaei, & Navidi 52). We notice that he becomes optimistic suddenly in the later part of the final section, and relies on religious belief. Eliot expects regeneration and a spiritual rebirth, which may rescue us from the catastrophe. Lockerd argues:

For Eliot, such discipline opens the door to rebirth and the peace that surpasses understanding. Yet what he provides in *The Waste Land* is not a simple solution to the problem of decadence. Like Huysmans, he turns to the cross of spiritual discipline as a source of hope, while still acknowledging the necessary and mysterious balance between death and rebirth. Eliot finds an answer to the problem of the decadent body in belief in the resurrection of the body. (11-12)

Then, he mentions the thunder’s reply, “Then spoke the thunder DA”. This ‘DA’ emphasizes on giving and sacrificing for people and becoming a selfless being. The second replay of the thunder was also ‘DA’, meaning ‘to sympathize’. Here ‘DA’ urges for sympathizing for other human beings who are in problems. And the final pronouncement of the thunder is again ‘DA’, meaning ‘to control’. This final ‘DA’ advocates us to control the lust. After following all three ‘DA’, we will be able to enjoy ‘shantih’ which means peace. Eliot ends the poem by three repeated words, “Shantih shantih shantih”.

### Conclusion

The paper, as discussed above, shows that Eliot’s poem, *The Waste Land* is the true depiction of modern crises, soon after the arrival of modernism that deconstructs everything that is conventional, traditional and old. Critically assessing the poem, the study finds that the poem penetrates into the construction of the modern life’s problems, where we have found lifelessness, corruption, disillusionment, futility, and failure and so on. Finally, the author attempts to gain a solution to all these crises through urging us to regain the lost religious and moral beliefs. As a final hope, Eliot depended on Eastern part of the world, suggesting the remedy of the crises could be found from religions like Hinduism and Buddhism. He viewed West and its soul-shivering materialistic lifestyles as motionless that made it like a *wasteland* where regeneration and hope seem far-fetched.

**Note:** The line numbers of the poem are quoted according to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (1993), 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Vol. 2, gen. ed. Abrams, Meyer Howard, London: Norton.

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