

**ALIENATION AND NEUROSIS
IN T. S. ELIOT'S POETRY**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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**Alienation and Neurosis
in
T.S.Eliot's Poetry**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “ Alienation and Neurosis in T.S.Eliot’s poetry” is my original research work. I also declare that I have not submitted this thesis either in full or in part or in any other form to any other university or institution for any degree or for any other purpose.

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Introduction

The early 20th century Western Europe had to face ever-changing challenges of urbanization which had started to accelerate with increasing industrialization, improvements in building design and construction technology and developments in communication. Since the middle of the Victorian period in England, for example, people from the villages began to flock to the cities in the hope for a better life, but met only hardship since the Victorian age. What they wanted was a good life for themselves and their families. But with the passage of time, they started to realize that it was hard to cope with life and soon got separated from their families, either by necessity or migration to cities meant leaving the family behind in the village --- or by design, as a means of reconciling to hard reality. Economics and social conditions were so hard that one was left with no choice but to struggle for survival, often alone. Often people from different places who were unknown to each other shared tenement accommodation in squalid and unhygienic conditions. So, the life of the recently commercialized society was unbearable for many. This was more or less a pattern. What these people were living was a mechanical way of life--- always counted with the commercial clock that ticked only for bread and work. There was lack of communication between any two individuals, --- neighbours, co-workers, even people who shared the same space. Belief in religion was weakened by the onslaught of technology, commerce and a growing commodity culture and science became the true balance. Individuals appeared to veer towards loneliness. As the social code reversed, alienation from others made people self-centered. The growing challenges of urban living made them frustrated and grief-stricken. This frustrating self-centeredness made them neurotic in their attitude and behaviour pattern. T.S.Eliot, in his poems, has depicted the awful picture of urban life and these pictures show the glimpses of alienated and neurotic characters.

Rapid urbanization, change in the social and intellectual order, and a burgeoning commodity culture brought to a head certain elements--- such as extreme individuality, alienation, a questioning mind, ennui and a spiritual vacuum--- that contributed to the rise of modernist literature. Section 1 of the dissertation explains the Modernist nature of English literature. Since the Victorian age the growing concentration of people in the

urban areas created many complications in the social life. And, Modernist Movement was born out of these experiences of complications. Most major poets of the era of Modernism---Charles Baudelaire, Ezra Pound, T.S.Eliot and W.H.Auden deal with the problems arising out of modernism in their different ways. To Baudelaire, for instance, life was dark and evil; life for Auden it was too mechanical and lacked in inspiration. It was T.S.Eliot however, who gave the most central treatment to the problems of the modern age as it unveiled both possibilities for expansion and the pain of losing one's identity.

Section B focuses on the topic--- "Alienation and Neurosis in T.S.Eliot's Poetry." Here some of Eliot's major poems have been discussed in four aspects so and, accordingly, the chapter has been divided into four sub-sections:

- (I) Alienation and Neural disorder
- (II) Animal magnetism: Futility and barrenness
- (III) Framing the whole society: Alienation and Neurosis
- (IV) Neurotics at large

Sub-section (I) analyzes the anxiety disorder in Prufrock and in the protagonist of "Portrait of a Lady." Both these characters have to make decisions that are essentially trivial but are brought with an impact only they can explain. But both of them fail to take any decision in the end. Nervous tension works as incapacitating drugs for these characters rendering them impotent. They lack proper communication capabilities due to their enormous exposure to the complicated world of the twentieth century.

Throughout the sub-section (II) efforts have been made to point out the futile relationships that a modern man so painstakingly attempts to build. And these futile relations that Eliot presents in "Gerontion" and "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," make one think that alienation and neurotic behaviour are the causes behind this. In both the poems Eliot has shown the complicated sexual urge of the twentieth century men and women. He has presented an image of Gerontion, in whose character the past and the present mingle. Sweeney, similarly, is a decaying figure of perverted sexual urges.

Sweeney does not have any emotional attachment, he rather performs the sexual act like an animal. Although both these characters reflect a larger lack of understanding between modern men and women, they are also Eliot's epitome of barrenness of life. Eliot presents the decaying image of love where the lovers carry the forbidden fruits of lust without any interest for emotion and passion. He has presented the sexual beings of modern time as victims of alienation which is exacerbated even by their life partners.

The sub-section (III) discusses the loss of moral values in the modern society. The basic theme of the poem *The Waste Land* is the disintegration of the modern civilization and the resultant sterility of the modern man. But Eliot has also given importance to the Christian doctrine of regeneration through prayer and suffering. The poem a social document that focuses on the living condition of people who belong to different classes of society in the modern world. At the end of the poem Eliot has given a remedy, for the afflictions that stunt the growth of modern men. Eliot, in *The Waste Land*, appears to say that rebirth of civilization is possible only through faith. The journey of Knight Perilous and the journey of the two disciples along with the hooded Christ reveal this point. Then Eliot draws on ancient Indian myth where the god Prajapati answered the prayer of distraught men and women through the voice of thunder. The three words he uttered are-- "da," "da," "da" which denote three basic virtues, the cultivation of which will release the denizens of *The Waste Land* from their suffering. "Datta," "Dayadhvam," and "Damyata" are the basic principles of the survival of the civilization.

The last sub-section explains the growing nature of neurotic behaviours in the modern man. Eliot's image of the hollow men are actually the representatives of the modern men who are spiritually barren, lacking in faith and the Christian spirit. These hollow men are leading a life like death-in life. They do not have any will power to perform any work. The world of the hollow men is like the dream-world--- meaningless and futile. Like the Lotus Eaters of Tennyson they cannot face the responsibilities of life. The several protagonists are content living a passive life. They have even no courage to face death. So, they are quite happy with their own condition of death-in life. The hollow men live in a dead land which is spiritually barren and sterile. Instead of having faith in Christianity they worship stone images. Spiritual truths are as far from them as is a fading

star. But the irony is that the hollow men do not want to change their life or the way they live. They lead an aimless life without any purpose. They are shadowed by fear and doubt. But they cannot be saved because they are not worth saving. Like Guy Fawkes they will leave this world whispering about their failure and frustration. They cannot even utter prayer for the Lord's grace which would save them. In the conclusion it can be said that their life remains only as an indication of fear and damnation.

Section A

The Modernist Movement and the 20th Century Literature: Some influence on T.S.Eliot

Since the Victorian age England has experienced a growing tendency towards urbanization. The term "urbanization" denotes not only the process whereby cities are built as a consequence of the spread of trade and commerce, industrialization, communication and of other form of social-economic development, but also the intellectual and emotional gaps that begin to grow between village bound lifestyles and a new lifestyle whose centre is the newly created city. Urbanization is fraught with uncertainties and complexities as people begin to cope with the loss of space, and the restrictions of movement. A growing mechanization which is a corollary of urbanization leads to unforeseen emotional and psychological complexities. In city life a person feels lonely even in the midst of a crowd and of his loneliness results in his alienation and detachment from others. This alienation often leads to neurotic attitude and behaviour patterns in the denizens of the city.

Modern cities have sprung up both as a result of a rapid industrialization and as a way of ordering new realities. As a result of advancement in new technologies in the 19th century rural people flocked to mills and factories built in and around cities and set up new communities --- the early versions of modern day slums. As different levels of people belonged to this community an individual often felt alienated even within this community. Besides, the separation from others and specially from the family left behind in the villages often created a sense of vacuum in people. To remove this emptiness the modern man began to search for a shelter. Religion increasingly failed to provide that shelter to the modern man, as his inner conflicts and loss of faith rendered him incapable of any firm, sustained belief. The lonely, disturbed individual found it difficult to foster close ties of friendship. There was no one to share his feelings. There is no sense of brotherhood in an urban setting. In modern life companionship is not available, as T.S.Eliot's Prufrock proves. He is friendless to the point that there is no one he can even

talk to. Modern man's excessive materialistic attitude has decreased his faith in religion. So, he has become more shelterless and restless and all these have caused his alienation.

The period from 1890 to the outbreak of the First World War transformed the whole social and private life of the people of England. There was a profound change in the thought and action of the English nation. The death of Queen Victoria marked the end of a glorious age and along with that the guarantee of safety and steady progress. A slow but inevitable social decay set in.

English literature of the last decade of the nineteenth century was characterized both by exhaustion and a revolt against the tendencies of the Victorian era. Towards the close of the century, a series of crisis severely affected British trade and agriculture. Economy was threatened and as a result unemployment and poverty were on the rise. The faith of middle class was severely shaken. They realized the limitations of their own values and beliefs. There was no political principle or social tradition to abide by, no moral sentiment in religion, in social relations and in domestic life. There was a silent revolt against inane conventions and rigid dogmas that had lost their effectiveness in the first place. The new spirit of unrest destroyed the certainties of the Victorian faith and way of life. Under the influence of this new spirit, the young generation of the nineties showed little respect for religious and spiritual values. Scientific progress and developments changed the external environment of life, and it led to more facilities in daily life. But the offuence of many was matched by the poverty of many others. This led to social tension. The views of Darwin and his disciples threatened Orthodox Christianity and the spirit of scepticism found expression in the works of Hardy, Shaw, Huxley and others.

In the closing years of the century there was a striking change in the total pattern of domestic life and family relationship in England. The stability of the Victorian household was shattered by external influences. A new spirit of restlessness shook the bond of family life and the young generation started to live their own lives, clamouring for unlimited freedom of thought and action.

At this time a profound change took place in the status and psychology of women. In the Victorian age, home was their only ground of activity and they were denied economic opportunities. Women were not expected to carry out any independent enterprise--- economic, social or political. They were to follow the line drawn by a male hierarchy. But in the closing years of the Victorian period, middle-class women insisted on “the equality of sexes” and were on their way to achieve a new dignity or status. Gradually, the helpless innocence of women which was both a state of being and a narration preventing any active role of women, was being replaced by a more robust activism. A new breed of women--- bold, self-confident and aggressive --- began to appear both in literature and social life. Along with the freedom of women in society there was a change in the moral climate towards the end of this era. Young men and women protested openly against old ideals and beliefs of love and matrimony. They claimed complete freedom of thought and action. This new activism in the sphere of thought influenced writers and poets of the time and of the modernist era. D.H.Lawrence, for example, wanted that men and women should think about sex freely, completely, honestly and clearly. The long-lasting love and matrimonial relations valorized and sanctioned by the society, particularly the male heirarchy were dismissed as false and misleading ideals. In 1889, the sudden exit of Nora from her husband’s house in Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House*, was astonishing to the European mindset. But Nora typified the freedom that women craved and, in many cases, attained. Leading thinkers and writers of the period were inspired by the ideals of social justice and under the stress of a strong social conscience they rejected the opinions of orthodox political pundits, social thinkers and economists. The age was marked by large scale proletarian unrest and trade-union activity; and the struggle for working class rights continued in the new century.

The existentialist philosophy of Martin Heidaggar which was later elaborated in the works of Franz Kafka and Albert Camus projected utter futility of the life of modern man. The existential question started to grip the whole of society as well as literature and the arts. Increasingly, writers and artists began to focus more on the meaninglessness of existence. This sudden change because of the hollowness of the urban life and post world war situation. While activism gained positive results in many fronts, there was a corresponding passivity and *ennui*; that marked the thinking of the age.

The modernist movement climbed a high point after the horrific experiences of the First World War. The War caused great destruction in life and property and resulted in economic decay in England as well as in the whole world. But more than that it created a huge disillusionment about the moral and ethical ideals that the society had held sacrosanct for so long. Suddenly, to use a line from W.B. Yeats, things were falling apart, and the center cannot hold. Modern man was so much obsessed with the idea of science being his guiding force, but the two world wars shocked him out of his complacency. He realized with horror that the killing hands of science were more vigorous and brutal than what its 'human' face painted. The modernist movement was influenced by all these developments, but above all by the sheer change in people's lives brought on by the powers of science and technology. By the 1920's there was mechanization of both external circumstances and the individual personality, an utter social change from rural life to the urban society. In the prevailing moral confusion the modern man started to feel lonely and isolated from the society at large. This predicament of modern man, his sense of loneliness and frustration is nowhere better described than in Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917). With the disintegration of social values the poet found himself in a complex and difficult world.

It is Baudelaire who influenced the young Eliot with his belief that boredom and sordidness could be the theme of poetry of the 20th century. By reading Eliot's biographies one can learn how he drew strength to suffer by looking at Baudelaire's life. Eliot maintained a distant attitude towards suffering when it involved himself--- as a result we have very little to go by about Eliot's responses to the various crises in his life. But when it came to suffering in his poetry, he was quite fluent, often clinical in describing them. Baudelaire was essentially the poet of Paris. He was not like the poets of the previous generation. His poetry reveals the changed social picture of urban life. He was the poet of urban milieu who had no nostalgia for country life, who had seen the complexity and paradox of modern life. Eliot shared with Baudelaire his deep distrust of the meaningless existence of the people of the metropolis. Infact, Baudelaire has influenced the whole generation of poets of the modernist period.

Baudelaire was the revolutionary poet of the modern, industrial city. Paris is the setting of most of his poems and he observes the bitter experiences of urban life through these poems, specifically in his selection of poems *Les Fleurs Du Mal* (The Flowers of Evil). It was not as a historian that he wanted to penetrate the mysteries of the city, rather as a lover who cherished even the defects of his mistress. Baudelaire had walked through the streets of Paris at night and found utter loneliness and bitter faces of urban life. Baudelaire revived the problem of Good and Evil and established a moral order by combining thought and feeling. Like other modernist poets there is a recurrent feeling of the problematic relationship with his audience, with his race, his environment, his cultural inheritance and with his readers. In "L' Invitation au Voyage" (Invitation to a journey), there is a representation of an intense feeling for order and calmness, as the poet says:

In lands to which you seem so similar!
The watery suns
In troubled heavens
Have for my soul the charms beyond compare,
(Baudelaire, *Selected Poems* : 103)

In a life full of misery and wretchedness, the French poet's yearning for order was closely associated with his tortuous sense of sin and redemption.

In Baudelaire's poems there prevails a persistent sense of morbidity. That is why Eliot called him the first counter-romantic. In his poetry there is a sense of boredom and alienation. He wanted to separate himself from the whole of the world, to be the poet of bitterness and hatred which would make him different from the Romantics. John Middleton Murry says,

Baudelaire was a great poet of decadence. In other words, he was a great modern poet: for the decadence which shaped him by compelling him to revolt against it was the "civilization of industrial progress" which has endured from his day to our own
(Murry : 108).

Eliot has called him the “Symbol of morbidity”. His is the observation of a solitary walker, who looks for a refuge in the crowd. In Baudelaire’s best poems there is a combination of flesh and spirit and of solemnity; a mixture of warmth and bitterness, which distinguishes the poem clearly from romantic verse. In his preface to *Les Fleurs Du Mal* Baudelaire declares his moral and social position. Though sin exists, and though there is Spleen, there still remains the Ideal. In the poet’s eyes, this two-faced sensibility was an essential characteristic of Romanticism. In “Benediction” he transforms the Romantic theme of curse which lies upon the poet, by giving the theme a new and spiritual significance and insisting that it is the poet’s suffering in this world which will save him in the coming world. Because he has glorified suffering as a means of redemption, the poet says here:

To Heaven, where he sees a splendid throne,
The tranquil Poet gazes piously;
His soul, bright as a constellation,
Conceals the sight of man’s hostility.

(Baudelaire, *Selected Poems* : 35)

The city, to Baudelaire, is both a city of glass and stone and concrete and a construct of the mind. The city-images in Baudelaire are therefore more like a phantasmagoria than a straightforward projection of reality. In Eliot too, the city images are a mixture of the real and the surreal. Eliot’s “Unreal-city” in *The Waste Land* reconstructs and restates, with the changing time, the essential Baudelairian experience. Profoundly disturbing images such as, “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” echo Baudelaire’s disturbing cityscapes. Both Eliot’s and Baudelaire’s perception of women is based upon the cat image that ends in inertia. Women are seen as desirable but any expression of love quickly fades into an inert appreciation of their beauty, or a slow relapse into disgust. This is best exemplified by the typist girl in *The Waste Land*. One finds close similarity between Eliot’s and Baudelaire’s attitude towards women. The picture of women Baudelaire paints in “Mon Coeur mis a`nu” appears a bit magnified in the procession of women in *The Waste Land*. It can be said that like Eliot, Baudelaire is ultimately not

pessimistic. He has his frustration no doubt, but he wants to be hopeful and wants the world to change.

After Baudelaire, Ezra Pound is another great influence on Eliot. Pound is one of the forerunners of the Imagist Movement of the 1920's. It was Pound's aim as a "Culture Poet" to collect the best of the past and to restore the lost principles of order. Eliot, in "Tradition and Individual Talent," echoed the catalyst theory fashioned after Pound's "equation" for Imagist poetry. Eliot has written about Pound on several occasions. He had a great deal in common with the imagists including Pound but their poetry took stock of the internality and externality of the imaging process and presented an almost comprehensive vision of reality. Pound started off as an almost purely aesthetic poet, in some of the later *Cantos* he became an almost purely didactic poet. Pound has been accused of fundamentally preaching Facism in the *Cantos*, but what he was actually doing in the poems was create the need for a corporate sense of social responsibility. Both as a poet and as a thinker, Pound revered the condition of labour. Imagism was a growing impatience felt by young poets with the staleness and conventionality of the diction and metre and sentiments of post-Victorian verse. Imagism, like nearly all other movements with which Pound has been associated, was a movement towards renewal and concentration of language. What Pound believed, however, and it comes out in some of his greatest poetry, is that it is the intensity of willing which creates the good, perhaps creates the real; but willing with this degree of intensity should be called love.

F.S.Flint has possibly more claims to be the originator of Imagism than Pound; but Pound with Hilde Doolittle and Richard Aldington was one of the leading lights of the movement, and the great spokesman and pusher of it; later in the United States, Imagism was taken up by Amy Lowell, whose cruder version of the theory Pound described rudely as Amygism. Pound's own Imagism is most to the fore in the selection of his poems called *Lustra*, while he often blends the technique of the Japanese *haiku* with that of the Greek or Latin epigram.

Along with Eliot, F.R.Leavis has also praised Pound's "Mauberley" as a "great poem." The protagonist wants to affect the tradition. He is a bold critic of current pomposities, a

lover of the beautiful for its own sake, and above all a conscientious craftsman. The poem is an objective and ironic disclosure of the decadent literary and socio-cultural aspect of England at the close of the First World War. M.L.Rosenthal says about Pound's work,

"In his work we see the poet as citizen refusing to accept the alienation thrust on him as artist; the craftsman meets the challenge of cultural crisis by teaching the world the "secret" behind craftsmanship--- its ideal of integrity" (Rosenthal: 59).

"Maunderley" is the summing-up of an individual life. It is basically an autobiographical account of a young American poet's effort to find himself within the English literary tradition. This search for identity is also in the poems of Eliot and other modernist poets. In Eliot's case such identity crisis results in alienation from others and finally to neurotic mentality. Pound is the poet of new beginnings, of vast curiosity. In "Maunderley" we see that the poet-protagonist fighting to re-create society in his own image. Besides, the poet under the pressure of self-knowledge splits in two psychological states. In "Maunderley" there is a pressure of experience and impulsion from deep within. The pressure seems to derive from a feeling of emptiness within the self and the society. These all lead to a sense of futility in Pound's mind.

Though Eliot and Pound were closely related in their poetic grounds, Pound was more interested in art; he was, in a more serious description, an aesthete. Whereas Eliot was interested in intense complexities of life, Pound was more concerned about the soul and body in respect of moral, religious and anthropological perspectives.

Eliot attempted to bring to English life the full force of the New England Puritan tradition. But it was not easy, as times kept changing too quickly for him to effect any fusion of values, or even an appreciation of the puritan tradition from the vantage point of his time. Modern life with its loss of faith, its fears and anxieties and paranoia ultimately created its own ethos, where uncertainty and indifference, and not dedicated action and involvement with life, ruled. With the early poems of Eliot, we find ourselves almost at home in the twentieth century. His poems reveal the "vulgarly" intimate daily world of the modern age in which Baudelaire and other French poets of the 19th century lost and

found themselves. As a modern poet Eliot has been much indebted to the symbolist, imagist and surrealist techniques of poetry. At the same time he drew much of his experiences from the First and later the Second World War and the Freudian theory of Psychoanalysis.

It is interesting to note that a poet of the medieval Europe, Dante, exercised such a great influence on T.S.Eliot. Eliot found Dante more a modern than medieval poet, and beyond all other poets of the continent, "the most European." From Dante he learnt how to love his craftsmanship and explore his sensibilities to the fullest. Eliot also drew inspiration from the late-nineteenth century English poets such as James Thomson (1834-82) rather than the American poets of his generation. Thomson's poem "The City of Dreadful Night" is an expression of the depression and inhumanity of the modern city. Here the poet has put up a sense of horror through unpoetic, urban settings. This poem bears a resemblance with Eliot's vision of the city in *The Waste Land*. Dante's vision of hell is also included in this poem which enabled Eliot to see the similarity of Dante's *Inferno* to contemporary city life. As Manju Jain says,

The nocturnal vigils, hallucinatory street-lamps, and phantom-like inhabitants of Thomson's poem bear a resemblance to Eliot's cityscapes. Thomson uses Dante to place his city within the context of Dante's vision of hell"(Jain: 9).

In Eliot's poetry the thematic structure grows out of the complexity and conflict in modern city life. The people and places we meet in Eliot's poems are more or less somehow distorted and seem out of sync. The people appear tortured and driven by a fear that modern man cannot seem to identify, let alone fight. These complexities and complications arise out of the modern living and this creates a sense of insecurity in modern people.

Like Eliot, Auden also expressed the spirit of the times in his poetry. Auden carried the tradition of Modernist poetry in line with T.S.Eliot, Pound and others. He is an intellectual poet of extraordinary versatility, with a far range of learning in all departments of contemporary thought. It is essential to understand both Eliot and Auden

in the context of their age, particularly the loss of values and ideals that were once cherished so highly by communities. Twentieth century poetry is a mixture of the traditional and the experimental, of the old and the new. The new poetry is the poetry of revolt against tradition, resulting largely from the impact of science. The revolt against tradition is best exemplified in the poetry of T.S.Eliot. The poet sees life in its stark realism and the common place subjects are considered suitable for poetry. The unpleasantness and ugliness of an industrial civilization is reflected everywhere in the works of Eliot and Auden. The tragedy of everyday life has also created in other poets of the 20th century a mood of disillusionment and so the poetry of today is bitter and pessimistic. The pessimism of modern poetry is thus tragic and heart-rending.

The most important characteristic of Auden's poetry that strikes us is its extremely difficult nature. This difficulty arises from the extreme density and epigrammatic terseness of his style. Moreover, Auden is rhetorical and high-sounding. Like Eliot, Auden also considered the modern age a spiritual waste land and the modern man a victim of boredom, ennui and neurosis. Auden has drawn his imagery from contemporary city life. The landscapes of his poetry are symbolic of spiritual and psychological states of the modern man. "Musee Des Beaux Arts" starts with a praise of the old painters, such as Brueghel, who realized the nature of suffering and humanity's indifference to it. Brueghel's *Icarus* shows how, while individuals suffer, the daily routine of life goes on as usual without any disturbance. "The dreadful martyrdom"--- which refers to the crucifixion of Christ, the son of God, was a great tragedy. But even this tragedy does not move the average humanity. People continue to eat and drink and enjoy their lives, the dogs continue to live their lives as usual and children continue to play in the midst of such a great tragedy.

That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and
The torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

(Auden, *A Selection by the Author* : 61)

Only a few religious minded people do care about Christ but the rest of the mankind is not interested either in the birth of Christ or his crucifixion. This is the general condition of the modern man as Auden depicts in his poetry. He is indifferent even towards Christianity.

Another poem of Auden, "The Unknown Citizen," also details the life of an average man. It is a poem about a normal working person who leads a very simple and undisturbed life. In this poem Auden is actually ridiculing the system by which man is reduced to a mere number. He satirizes the modern craze for statistics to measure a man. It reminds us of Eliot's familiar character Prufrock when he says "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." The whole thing reveals the trivialities of human life in the modern world. Human beings have lost the importance of their life, and simply turned into statistical figures and objects of curiosity. It is the tragic condition of modern man. The monument in this poem reminds us of the memory of the unknown soldier who has lost his life in protecting his motherland. Besides, the number assigned to him quickly erases his name also shows that when a man becomes a mere number he loses all individuality. In this poem Auden attacks the concept of a human being becoming a product of economic, commercial and ideological institutions that bind him to conform to a standard pattern of life and thought.

Among modern poets, Auden holds an important position next to T.S.Eliot. His ideas and beliefs evolved with the passing of time. In the early phase of his career, he was under the influence of contemporary psychology and started to believe that a "change of heart" was necessary for the cure of human sickness. Then after some time under the influence of Marxism Auden began to believe that a "change of environment" was essential and it could be brought about only through social acts. In 1939, his views changed again under the influence of Christian theology. He started to believe that the cure of human ills remained only in faith and universal love and this was his final message in his poetry.

Auden's poetry is a bit vague at the first reading. This vagueness arises out of the crisis of modern life. Still, Auden's poetry has similarity in themes with Eliot's. The modern age

has become for some a spiritual wasteland and people here suffer from a sense of boredom, frustration and neurosis. He is lonely to the point that he is lost even in a crowd. This modern spirit is represented by the use of imagery drawn from the facts of contemporary city life. Auden's landscapes are symbolic of spiritual and psychological states of the modern man, and so are his peoples and places. Both Auden and Eliot show lonely characters in their poems. Loss of faith in religion and life is another common theme between them. As Eliot's Gerontion has lost his faith in Christianity, such are the faithless people found in Auden's "Musée Des Beaux Arts," where during any individual's suffering the rest of mankind remains undisturbed. So, it can be said that though "urbanity" was brought to poetry by Baudelaire and Pound moderated it in his own way, the maturity of this theme is emphasized in the poetry of Eliot and Auden.

Section B

Alienation and Neurosis in T.S.Eliot's Poetry

In T.S.Eliot's poetry one of the major themes is alienation. When a human being is alienated from others he may develop, in extreme cases of isolation and maladjustment with society, some sort of neurosis. Indeed, neurosis is one of the more frequently met disorder in men and women of the 20th century. Eliot takes cognizance of this disorder in men and women of his time, and presented it as a leading theme in his poetry.

It is difficult to suggest if Eliot had any personal encounter with neurosis --- no biography of the poet tells us about any history of neurosis in his family. But his biographers do suggest that Eliot was witness to a slow disintegration of the mind of his first wife, Vivien. It was a harrowing experience for Eliot and brought him closest to an experience of utter disillusionment, hallucination and disorientation. In June 1915 Eliot married Vivien Haigh-Wood. But the marriage appears to have caused them both intense suffering because of their differences in temperament, their financial problems and Vivien's chronic illness. Due to Vivien's neurotic symptoms and impulsiveness, Eliot was unable to give full attention to his writing during that period and their marriage soon broke up. The recurrent theme of neurosis in his poems thus appears to have a personal dimension.

With the coming of modern age the subconscious mind came into focus specially with Freudian psychoanalysis. With the publication of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900, the world was introduced for the first time with the workings of the complex subconscious mind. The operations of the subconscious mind, according to Freud, are triggered by the suppression of desire, among other things. For modern man, as exemplified by *Prufrock*, such suppression is a routine affair. Besides, other factors such as a general lack of direction, loss of faith, paranoia, or a profound indifference to life may also effect the workings of the subconscious mind. In this modern age life has lost its purpose with the collapse of religious beliefs and there is nothing to guide modern man in the proper direction. This has given birth to a new type of literature, profoundly analytical

of the operations of the subconscious mind, of which T.S.Eliot is a remarkable literary personage.

During the period when Eliot was writing poetry agricultural England was changing rapidly to cope up with the capitalist society. People were coming more and more to the industrial towns and cities to seek job opportunities and trying to settle down in an urban locality. Migration of the village people had been taking place since the Victorian age. But the major difference between the time of Tennyson and Eliot was the lack of any substantial belief in religion or social customs. From Tennyson's period people had started to turn towards urban life but by the time Eliot began to project the urban waste land these people inhabited, the meaninglessness and complexities of life often resulted in insanity and alienation in modern life. The appearance of Darwin's book *The Origin of the Species* in 1859 had a great impact upon the society and the minds of men. A hundred years or so later, Sartre's Existentialist philosophy had a similar impact although on a much lesser scale. People faltered in their beliefs both in the 19th and the 20th centuries, but by the time the First World War had taken its toll in terms of human lives and shattered ideals, Europe felt a barrenness in its soul. Eliot realized that the modern man lived his life in a vacuum, which leaves him with no substance.

In the early phase of his career Eliot was concerned with urban life--- especially the life in big cities. He had studied different types of city-people, their habits and manners. He was deeply influenced by Laforgue and the other French Symbolists. He learnt from Baudelaire how a big city has a torturing effect upon the soul of the individual. And he was very much skilful in presenting this theme in his major poems. We will look for alienation and neurosis in the poems---"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "Portrait of a Lady," "Gerontion," "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," *The Waste Land* and "The Hollow Men." In *The Waste Land*, he calls London "The Unreal City," because, in spite of its industrial progress and physical comforts, its total atmosphere is just horrible. Here in this waste land of a city, people have no sense of direction and purpose and Eliot expresses this in these words:

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, (Eliot, *CP*: 53)

The city is unreal because there is no real social or communal life. Human beings are living here but they actually seem to be dead. Eliot's London is compared with Dante's *Inferno*:

Unreal City,
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. (Eliot, *CP*: 55)

Modern psychologists have found that a majority of people is actually abnormal. They suffer from different types of mental illnesses which are compounded by anxiety and frustration. Modern people are lonely and the main reason of their being neurotic is that they are alienated from each other. Lack of communication is the major reason of their being neurotic. In this society people have become self-centred and unsympathetic. Everyone thinks of his own interest, and thus each one is imprisoned in his own self. People have lost the key of human sympathy and compassion:

We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms prison (Eliot, *CP*: 69)

In the next sub-section will be discussed some of Eliot's poems in the light of "Alienation and neural disorder," "Animal magnetism," "Social overview" and "Neurotics."

(I) Alienation and neural disorder

Anxiety is one of the psychological pressures that is common in an urban setting, and one that modern man feels regularly. In Eliot's poetry, we find some characters exposed to the anxieties of the modern society. Prufrock is the most anxiety-ridden man in Eliot's poems. The first poem that will be discussed is therefore "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Eliot's love song is not really a love song though love is the underlying theme. The poem is rather a tortuous interior monologue of an individual unable to enter into any meaningful relationship. It is profoundly psychological and is intended to dissect the suppressed feelings of the lover, especially his cowardice and irresolution. It records the indecision, hesitation and postponement of the proposal of the lover. The first line of the poem, "Let us go then, you and I" may suggest that it is a dialogue between two persons but it is not so. It seems to the reader that it is an internal debate in the mind of Prufrock, between the two sides of his personality which thereby highlights his persistent nervousness and neurosis.

Anxiety is a term used in Clinical Psychology to denote a general state of apprehension or foreboding. People with anxiety disorder often overpredict the amount of fear or anxiety they will experience when exposed to anxiety-evoking stimuli. Neuroticism is characterized by anxiety, a sense of foreboding, and fear-inducing stimuli. Prufrock suffers from periodic fits of anxiety.

Prufrock is also an embodiment of split personality--- a separation of head and heart, a paralysis of the will and too much worry regarding a love proposal. Prufrock refers to Hamlet and this enables us to understand his psychological malady. His rambling introspection is the result of emotional frustration.

Prufrock suffers from social phobia. In feared social or performance situations, individuals with social phobia experience concerns about embarrassment and are afraid that others will judge them to be anxious, weak, crazy or stupid. A person with social phobia typically will avoid the feared situations. The fear or avoidance must interfere significantly with the person's normal routine, social activities or relationships. Prufrock

has known many ladies and enjoyed sessions of tea and coffee with them. He has also been intimate with some of them. But he dares not speak out his mind. He is timid and cowardly, afraid of the ladies' rebukes or taunts. In such a situation he feels like an insect wriggling on a wall fixed with a pin.

Two of the states associated with extreme anxiety are Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Acute Stress Disorder. Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by excessive worry, but such worries are distinguished from obsession by the fact that the person experiences them as excessive concerns about real-life circumstances. The individual finds it difficult to control the worry. The anxiety and worry are accompanied by symptoms like restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating or disturbed sleep--- which are present in modern man, represented by the character of Prufrock --- when he says:

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me. (Eliot, *CP* : 5)

Acute stress disorder is characterized by extreme anxiety and by dissociation or feelings of detachment from oneself or one's environment. People with an acute stress disorder may feel they are in a daze or the world seems unreal to them. Prufrock is also unable to face the problems of life and is thus suffering from this kind of disorder as he dreams:

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me.
I have seen them riding seaward on the waves. (Eliot, *CP*: 7)

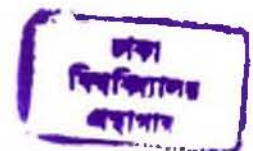
Thus he seeks an escape to a romantic world. Symptoms of despair and hopelessness may be experienced in this kind of disorder and may be sufficiently severe and persistent to meet the criteria for a Major Depressive Episode.

In specific phobia, the individual experiences a marked, persistent, and excessive or unreasonable fear when in the presence of a specific object or situation. For example, people afraid of heights may also worry about dizziness, and people afraid of closed-in-situations may also worry about losing control and screaming. Throughout "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" Prufrock is trying to express his love but he is afraid of facing his beloved probably because he suffers from specific phobia.

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Modernization has improved the material and physical aspects of life, but ironically, has turned people self-centered, and isolated from one another. Modern living is opposite to community living where people share each other's life. In a modern city there is hardly any communication among people. The modern man has done everything for his physical comforts, but he has not been able to ensure mental relief. He is always worrying about something that causes his tension resulting in different levels of neural disorder. Science is unable to solve his problem. Besides, there is no strong religious faith or belief in modern man. Even if he believes, he keeps it separate from his everyday activities. Constant fears and doubts blunt his sensibilities. For that, a modern man like Prufrock is not only alienated from society but also from his own self. But under the pressure of his nerves he is unable to express his loneliness even to the person whom he loves because of his lack of courage. He is afraid of death and the very idea of death deters him from expressing his love to his beloved. Prufrock is also afraid of being rejected by the lady and so throughout the poem he drifts; there is no progress with the love affair of Prufrock as he says:

Then how should I begin?
 To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
 And how should I presume? (Eliot, *CP* : 5)



Prufrock is extremely nervous. He thinks that if a magic-machine were to throw light on his inner feelings and display them to his lady, she may reject him. His condition shows the nervousness and tension of the modern man and the barrenness of the urban civilization.

"Portrait of a Lady" is another poem which has a similar form and theme as "Prufrock." Here Eliot has presented an elegant society which is hollow from within but is full of pretensions. Here the poet develops a conflict of feelings in the minds of the modern people. When we read the poem we get the feeling that it is not the portrait of a lady, rather it is the portrait of another uncertain Prufrock. The central theme of the poem is man-woman relationship. There is also the problem of human isolation--- the isolation of the individual from other people and from the world. The young man of the poem has a kind of self-possession and at the same time he is a victim of nervous tension and does not know how to act about his concealed feelings. In fact, he runs out into the open air to escape from the lady's attachment. The old lady is very much interested about the young man and tries heart and soul to get his love. She expresses her feelings but the man does not respond to her:

I am always sure that you understand
My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand (Eliot, *CP*: 10)

Eliot's character resembles Mersault, the protagonist of Albert Camus' novel *The Outsider* --- who is an outsider, is doubtful about himself, his love and life, and cannot communicate with others. On the other hand, his problems are of Prufrock's who is maintaining just a routine life.

The first section of "Portrait of a Lady" opens as the lady has invited the young man in her room on a December afternoon to be intimate with him. The poet compares the room with Juliet's tomb, because the lady is half-alive and half-dead like Juliet. The room is dark and it symbolizes the lady's failure in love. The lady wants to win the sympathy of the young man and so she tells him about her personal life, her likes and dislikes. At last she expresses her love openly but her appeal seems harsh to the man. He wants to avoid the lady and goes out of the room and relaxes himself with a smoke.

In the second section spring season has arrived and lilacs are in bloom. The lady is now quite hopeful. She now tells the young man to enjoy his youth but her conversation again seems to him harsh like the sound of a broken violin:

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon. (Eliot, *CP*: 10)

She continues her talk with the hope that they will get closer but the young man is confused about his feelings. He is mentally disturbed and rejects the love of the lady. Here we can find again the similarity of character between this young man and Prufrock -- both of them are indecisive and cowardly and cannot accept love as a natural process.

The third section opens on an October night. It is autumn and the young man has come for the last time to meet the lady. He has decided to go abroad. The lady tells him to write a letter to her and she feels sad for her unsatisfied desire:

Perhaps you can write to me.
My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned. (Eliot, *CP*: 11)

The young man again tries to escape this situation by becoming a 'dancing bear' or a 'crying parrot' or a 'chattering ape'. He again wants to go out to find relaxation by smoking tobacco. Besides, he thinks that the old lady may die of a broken heart some afternoon. He doesn't know how he would react to her death--- whether he was foolish or wise in rejecting her love. Like Mersault he feels indifferent towards everything. The sound of the 'dying fall' of music mixes with his inner feelings. George Williamson says,

The third section answers the question by decision. His flight is no longer going to be temporary. But while his action is decisive enough, his reaction is shadowed with doubt. This time the imagery of his return involves mounting the stairs; and, as in "Prufrock," it is a tensional imagery of effort and awkwardness. Now his 'self-possession gutters' in the candle imagery of the opening situation, and his

smiles are really forced; And it all ends on the original theme of escape.
(Williamson:73)

The fact is that the young man feels that his only way to relax and avoid the entire situation is to escape from it. Actually, the old lady and the young man are both victims of urban civilization. They suffer from alienation and their lack of communication is responsible for it. So, they are doubtful about their feelings. Thus Eliot has shown quite convincingly that by leading a life without any real emotions modern men and women have fallen victims of neurosis.

The theme of alienation and neural disorder are again found in *The Waste Land*. In the early 20th century most of the individuals lead a life that offered no excitement, as if they had fallen into a rut from which they could not be rescued. The lady of Situations represents any modern woman. This fashionable society lady talks to a visitor who is supposed to be her lover. She tells him to stay on as she is suffering from a nervous break-down, but the lover does not reply but looks blank. This is a comment on the disease of modern life, namely futile tension and thinking about nothing.

What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

'I never know what you are thinking. Think.' (Eliot, *CP*: 57)

The lover gives a reply that is significant: he says, men are like rats, stirring dead bones in an alley. This indicates the monotony of the routine civilized life.

London is a commercial city and one of the major complexities that arises out of commercialization is sexual perversion. Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant comes to London for a business transaction. He is a loose character who is interested in enjoying sex relationship in hotels. Eliot gives another symptom of disorder through the mechanical sex relationship of the typist-girl and her boy friend. She is indifferent towards mechanical sex-game. She goes through the motion but she has no pleasure and no sense of regret. After the act, gets up and looks at the mirror and arranges her hair. She

feels glad that the sex-act is over. In the past, loss of chastity was considered worse than death for a woman. But, in the early 20th century it is almost like a mechanical routine.

In "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" the protagonist himself is a neurotic character who leads a life full of violence, suspicion and mechanical sex. Besides, there are two female characters in the pub who also behave abnormally. The first woman in the Spanish cape is a common prostitute without a name. She tries to sit on Sweeney's knee and persuades him in many ways. But somehow, Sweeney smells of a danger and pushes her down. The second prostitute is Rachel who keeps on changing her name as the circumstances require. Her murderous paws clearly indicate her violent tendency. Both these women are engaged in the planned murder of a wicked and perverted person. Eliot satirizes the sexual jealousy and trivialities of modern society which lead to crime and violence. Due to urban living, alienation among people is becoming a major social problem. These people start to feel alienated from the society and this results in their neurotic disorder.

(II) Animal magnetism: Futility and barrenness

Two other poems "Gerontion" and "Sweeney Among the Nightingales"--- are different in theme and in terms of characters represented. In a modern society people often lack the will to establish a genuine relationship. Physical relationships culminate in futile sexual encounters. Gerontion, for example, realizes his futile existence and Sweeney sinks into perversity. Prufrock belonged to the contemporary upper class society, whereas Gerontion is an old man who is almost blind and living in low society. He lives in a rented house, bad smell comes out of it, he calls it a "decayed house." The landlord who is a Jew watches the house. The maid keeps the kitchen but she is sick and bored. The theme of the poem is highly philosophical. The action of the poem is set in the mind of the old man. Along with his physical surroundings, he thinks of his past and present. Gerontion is both an individual and the debilitating time of old age when everything starts to decay. He represents the futility and barrenness of modern civilization:

The goat coughs at night in the field overhead,
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter. (Eliot, *CP*: 29)

In this poem Eliot exposes the post-war decay and destruction. Modern man leads a barren and futile life just as the life that the old man lives. He is quite confused about himself and the purpose of the world. He leads an alienated life and has become a neurotic, he calls himself "dull head... among windy spaces." Here Eliot shows the causes of decay and corruption of the modern world. Eliot detects the loss of Christian faith and moral values as the root cause of the decay of modern civilization. But there are other factors that are also equally responsible: the misinterpretation of history, the bad impact of rationalism, and a loss of spiritual values. Under the influence of science people have got a rational attitude towards Christianity which verges on rejecting it altogether since faith cannot be "proved" scientifically. Gerontion feels sorry for the loss of religious faith in him:

I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition (Eliot, *CP*: 31)

The two lines state the spiritual change that has been mentioned in the poem. These are the stages by which Gerontion was separated from the heart of Christ. Stephen Coote says:

There is a feeling of great age about "Gerontion," of disillusioned passion long patience, that characterizes some of the portraits of Rembrandt. Gerontion is more noble than Prufrock, more inured to suffering and disappointment. He is not at home in a salon world. One does not sense his wearing formal clothes.... The aged Gerontion looks with saddened helplessness at the futile wreck of human life. He is a little apart from it in his sleepy corner (Coote: 23).

Eliot in this poem has presented the sense of boredom of modern civilization through the feelings of Gerontion. Having reached the edge of his life Gerontion now feels how futile and barren his existence has been. The poem begins with the picture of a dry, rainless month suggesting total spiritual aridity. Gerontion anxiously waits for rain. This dryness means the spiritual barrenness of both himself and that of the modern society. Actually Gerontion is the victim of modern civilization, its "scientific progress" and commercialization. His old age is the symbol of the decay of modern civilization. At this age Gerontion looks back to his past life. He can realize how meaningless his life has been, without any achievement or anything of note to remember and feel pleased about now. The decayed house of Gerontion is the symbol of a decomposed civilization. A.D.Moody says,

Gerontion is not so much suffering his fate, as watching himself be its victims. His self-dramatisation has become a mode of resignation to Fate, He is rather like Othello in his last speech, when he would have the onlookers "Speak of me as I am".... The sexual innuendo which pervades the poem-and which is closely related to that of 'Measure for Measure,' What it suggests is that Gerontion's decay is essentially a decay of love, that

he is as he is because he has attached his desire to no lasting object. (Moody: 69, 70)

We can also add that Gerontion's incapacity to sustain love is as much a problem with him, as it reflects the inability of his age to hold on to truth or any profound feeling for long. Gerontion laments the loss of his passion for his beloved. For his old age he cannot have intimacy with her. Though he has feelings for her, his sexual urge cannot stop the natural process of being aged and decayed.

Eliot satirizes sexual jealousy and trivialities of modern society in amore poignant manner in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." At the beginning of the poem the protagonist sits in a pub: he is fond of wine and women. Sweeney looks like a sexy ape, full of animal spirits:

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh, (Eliot, *CP*: 49)

The atmosphere reeks of debilitation, and is thick with the fear of an impending disaster. The moon is covered with dark clouds. Here "death" is personified as a planet. The death of Agamemnon is symbolized by "the horned gate." The two other stars --- the Orion and the Dog, are covered with clouds. These stars are associated with the fertility myth. The poem's images and metaphors weave a net that will eventually trap the protagonist. All these create an atmosphere of violence, gloom and uncertainty:

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the horned gate. (Eliot, *CP*: 49)

In the course of the poem we find that a plot has been made against Sweeney's life. But fortunately, he can smell the danger and runs away to save himself. George Williamson says:

In this poem (1918) an attempt to seduce Sweeney in a café or public house is put into a framework that suggests the Agamemnon story, which provides the epigraph, his mortal cry, "Ay me! I am smitten with a mortal blow!".... Sweeney sprawls, gapes, is silent and heavy-eyed until the bait of the fruit makes him "contract" and become alert. His refusal to take this sacrificial pawn reveals the change in his state of mind. The actions of the lady in the Spanish cape and the "murderous paws" of Rachel together spell out his danger. The agent of his fate is of course the "someone indistinct" with whom the host converses apart (Williamson: 97-98).

From the situation it can be said that Sweeney is careful enough about the danger and so he does not eat the fruits and leaves the place.

The pub in which Sweeney has come at the invitation of the owner--- is full of visitors and prostitutes. The prostitutes entertain him and offer him fruits. The owner of the pub is a degraded man. The killing of Sweeney will be done by a hired murderer. In this atmosphere of tension Sweeney feels very confused. Perhaps the owner has designed the plot against Sweeney by engaging the prostitutes and the hired killer. However, it matters little whether he is killed or survives for the day, What is important is that he represents a spiritually barren world where the only pleasure is offered by sex, but even then the sexact is ridden with anxiety. Through Sweeney Eliot has symbolized modern man's degraded and uprooted character--- who fully devotes himself to all the fun of sex only for pleasure and has lost his nerves in the process. He is not normal in behaviour, is rather a person fond of violence and likes to engage in mechanical sex which is without any emotional feeling:

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes; (Eliot, *CP*: 49)

At the end of the poem we can realize that Sweeney's planned murder is not a disaster at all. It is rather a plot hatched by murder of a wicked person who is engaged in sexual perversions. Eliot has given mythological examples like the Raven, the Horn gate and the reference to the myth of Philomela's rape to expose the triviality of Sweeney's proposed murder. Sweeney is a modern society vagabond whose death will lead to no result. That is why the poet compares the fruitless murder of Sweeney with the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra. The reason that can be described for both the murders is obviously lust. Agamemnon's murder was avenged as his son Orestes murdered his mother. But Sweeney's murder would not have brought any good results, because he is a perverted man of the modern society whose life is not so much valuable. Through this contrast between the ancient world and the contemporary world Eliot has illustrated the moral corruption and violence which are responsible for the destruction of modern civilization.

(III) Framing the whole society: Alienation and Neurosis

In *The Waste Land* Eliot has tried to focus on the alienated and neurotic behaviour of the people in modern society. In this poem he has covered the different classes of people exposed to the complications of modern society. The themes of sterility and fertility are central to the first section "The Burial of the Dead." Cleanth Brooks observes that the theme of the first section is the attractiveness of death. Through the protagonist, Tiresias, Eliot gives his impressions about the modern society. The citizens of the wasteland are spiritually dead. April is normally regarded as a symbol of re-birth, but for the wastelanders, April is a bad and cruel month. But they are happy in winter because then they can relish the pleasure of slipping into reminiscence, a passive act that turns all actions into images that they can call up at their leisure. But then, for a modern man, life is a "heap of broken images." In reminiscing, modern men and women feel the emptiness and pain that time leaves them as a legacy.

Tiresias has come across a German Princess (Bin gar keine Russin, stamm aus Litauen, echt deutsch. And when were children, staying at the arch-duke's, Eliot, *CP*: 53), who is a neurotic and represents the rootlessness of European civilization. Summer and winter are mere seasons for this society-lady, which indicates her bodily comfort or discomfort. In the 20th century sex has become a source of tension and despair, and it destroys man's spiritual feelings. Sex has degraded to an animal passion without any individual commitment. Eliot mentions two examples of guilty love. The story of Tristan and Isolde is the first example and the second example is the story of the Hyacinth girl. These episodes show the barrenness, boredom and frustration of guilty love. Modern man has lost his faith in religion and he has no hope of spiritual re-birth. In a big city gambling is a very common event and Madam Sosostris is the evil fortune-teller. She is afraid of the police and is known as the wisest woman in Europe, because she can tell the fortunes of people with her wicked tarot pack of cards:

Madam Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards. (Eliot, *CP*: 54)

Here is one card of Belladonna--- the Lady of the Rocks, who is a society lady. Other cards are of the drowned Phoenician sailor, the man with the three staves and the one-eyed merchant. These cards indicate the decline of values in modern society, which is the major theme of *The Waste Land*. The major characters found in *The Waste Land* are spiritually barren and dead and the life that they lead may be called "life -in -death." The city was a maternal symbol to the ancients, but now it is utterly barren. It is "unreal" because it is cut off from both natural and spiritual sources of life, and because it no longer has anything of its old sense of "community." In this modern period most individuals exist in drab loneliness and the mass has become truly faceless. Eliot in *The Waste Land* has shown that urban civilization is devoid of roots and epitomizes the cultural, moral decay of our time. Most individuals of cities come from the villages or interior areas who do not find any unifying culture or ideas to provide them a sense of belonging. The long process of industrialization brought about a need for workers in mills, factories and industries flourishing in and around the city. These rural people could not find any place of their own where they could be themselves and communicate with others. This loss of communication created a huge vacuum in their social life. Thus people became separated from their roots and were alienated from their life sustaining melieus. Besides, a lack of faith in higher values brought about by technological and scientific progress also contributed to their alienation and they became increasingly self-centred. Stephen Coote says,

Eliot opens with a reminiscence of Baudelaire, a poet of the modern city and deep moral anal.... Eliot inspects his London commuters "under the brown fog of a winter dawn." Again, they are actual and vividly located....Modern London is thus transmogrified. It becomes The eternal type of the city of dreadful night, a place where the masses of modern society ebb and flow in a godless, mechanical routine of work (Coote: 35).

These observations are related closely with the main theme of the poem--- modern man's spiritual crisis and his futile existence.

In the second section of *The Waste Land*, "A Game of Chess," neurotic symptoms are found in sex perversions. In modern age sex has lost its moral and social purpose. Anxiety and angst make modern man incapable of enjoying sex as a fulfillment of a natural urge, often underlying a large purpose such as continuation of a genealogical line, but feels it more as a means of physical enjoyment. Mechanical sex impulses have replaced passion and feeling, and sexual perversion has become a common outcome of deprivation and debilitation. In this society love has failed to achieve its higher values. Modern man has lost his capacity to gain spiritual love. The poem provides a vivid and graphic description of a drawing room of a fashionable society-lady called the Lady of Situations. She is involved in sex-intrigues and is suffering from mental crisis. She waits for her lover who arrives after some time. To him she complains of her headache which is a symptom of nervous break-down of a modern woman:

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. (Eliot, *CP*: 57)

This society-woman is bored with her own life and has become extremely neurotic. Her lover also suffers from mental crisis as he says:

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones. (Eliot, *CP*: 57)

After some conversation, the lady wishes to run out into the streets. Her daily routine of life is very empty and aimless. She follows a dull routine--- hot water bath in the morning, a game of chess in the club in the afternoon and then rest. Here we can refer to an event from Eliot's own life--- his first unhappy marriage with Vivien Haigh-Wood,

which was more like a disaster. She was increasingly unstable in mind, and became a victim of neurosis and insomnia. The marriage was broken and Eliot just tried to run away from her life. From this event of Eliot's life we can place his wife parallel with the Lady of the Situations.

The episode of Lil also presents a picture of sex perversion in real life. Albert, the husband after returning from the army wants to enjoy an active sexual life. But Lil is bored and tired by her repeated motherhood. Her health is broken and she has lost her interest in life. She is confused and frustrated and has become a neurotic. The lady of the Rocks advises Lil to be young to impress her husband. Because there are many other women who will give company to Albert. Here both women are unsatisfied in love and dissatisfied with life:

He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.

(Eliot, *CP*: 58)

The last line of this section "Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night."--- is taken from Ophelia's farewell in Hamlet. These words conclude Ophelia's mad speech before her suicide by drowning and it indicates the tragedy of the married life of Lil and Albert. Sex perversities appear to have made modern man's life hellish and terrible.

The title of the third section, "The Fire Sermon" is taken from Lord Buddha's sermon in which he said that the world is on fire--- the fire of lust which burns up human life. The protagonist gives a description of the river Thames in the autumn, but the river is polluted now. Manju Jain says about this section:

Both the Buddha and St. Augustine describes sensual temptation as a burning fire. The Buddha advocates the cultivation of an aversion for the pleasures of the senses, which will lead to freedom from passion, and thence from rebirth. St. Augustine trusts to the grace of God for salvation (Jain: 181).

Eliot uses both Buddha's and St. Augustine's "fire sermon" to strengthen his theme of spiritual degeneration of modern man and possible restoration of the body's sanity through spiritual discipline. According to Buddha there are different stages of life. In "The Fire Sermon" Buddha counsels his followers to conceive an aversion for the burning flames of passion and physical sensation. Buddha also suggested that the only way to be free from this passion is to suffer--- and one way of achieving that is through meditation. Eliot has also mentioned the decay of society due to uncontrolled passion and indisciplined sex. Eliot also suggested that regeneration of mankind is possible only through suffering. St. Augustine made a confession of his youthful temptation. But the basic difference between the attitude of Buddha and that of St. Augustine is that the latter seeks God's grace for freedom from lust and at last is saved. St. Augustine insisted that a true knowledge of the soul's nature can be based only on the immediate awareness of self-consciousness; and the soul's awareness of itself is of a trinity in unity that reflects "as in a glass darkly" the being if its Maker.

Prior to writing *The Waste Land* Eliot studied Buddhism and Hinduism at Harvard, and he experimented with both philosophies in his later works. In "The Fire Sermon", Eliot recalls Buddha's teachings and the Sermon on the Mount, and he purposefully unites the teachings of St. Augustine and Buddha to illustrate the similarities of Eastern and Western schools of thought, particularly as they relate to the upliftment of the individual through purging his soul of sin. This section of *The Waste Land* specifically recalls the Buddha's own Fire Sermon from the Maha-vagga, quoting him in the last four lines of the section by repeating the word "burning." In *The Waste Land* Eliot actually refers to three Buddhist concepts taken directly from The Fire Sermon and other early Buddhist sermons: the impermanence of all phenomena and universality of suffering, cynical existence through time and circumstance, and the source of suffering in the craving for worldly objects. Eliot makes a connection between Christianity and Buddhism, dealing with the perennial problem of human suffering, and responding to the same fundamental perception that moved Krishna or the Buddha. The parallel of East and West culminates in "The Fire Sermon," the core of *The Waste Land* in which the Buddha and St. Augustine are brought together. The image of fire in "The Fire Sermon" represents the pain of

worldly experience and process of purification to overcome this pain --- the ultimate goal of the journey through the spiritual waste land. This purification frees the mind from attachment to depravity and allows the speaker to transcend both the self and suffering for unmet needs. The speaker's God removes him from a daily existence of suffering and leaves him emptied of anxiety, with only the mantra "burning" to occupy his soul. The basis of this suffering comes from two sources: man's lust for impermanent, worldly objects and his attachment to the process of life and death. In Eliot's "The Fire Sermon," Tiresias also traces the origins of suffering to lust, describing the scene between two unfulfilled, unhappy lovers. Being both man and woman, Tiresias is the embodiment of nirvana. A paradoxical figure, Tiresias represents the transcendence of earthly passions and personal existence. Eliot ends "The Fire Sermon", and *The Waste Land* as a whole, with a glimpse into the state of a satisfied and happy soul. Just as Tiresias understands that craving binds man to the phenomenal world and makes him suffer. Man, too, can understand the origin of his misery and transcend it to achieve a higher state of being. By purifying his soul and burning away the lust for transient, worldly things, man can achieve the transcendence and inner peace that Buddha refers to in "The Fire Sermon."

The pollution of the spirit and the soul through uncontrolled passion and lust that characterizes people like Sweeney, the typist girl or the young man carbuncular is a symbol of spiritual decay of modern man and his civilization. London --- the unreal city is full of sexual perversions. Mr. Eugenides, the man of business and commerce--- is fully devoid of moral values. He is interested in homosexual relationship in the Metropole and Cannon Street hotels. The poet feels very depressed when he observes the river bank and the polluted state of the river. Queen Elizabeth and her lover took pleasure trips on the Thames. But now the daughters of Thames disclose their tragic stories of rape. The first daughter was criminally assaulted by a man at Richmond, the second daughter was ravished at Moorgate and the third daughter was raped at Margate Sands. At the present time the poet does not hear the sweet music of the river but the sound of laughter of modern men and women. Today the roads along the bank are full of motor cars. The sound of the horns is a signal for Mrs. Porter to meet her lover Sweeney. Mrs. Porter and her daughter wash their feet not in the river water but in soda water. Modern civilization is so much degraded that everywhere, in all classes, corruption prevails. Lust and rape are

responsible for the decay and corruption of modern society. But modern man has no regret for his evil acts. One of the daughters of Thames compares herself to the broken finger nails of dirty hands. She has also lost all sense of connection between past and present, as she says:

"On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing." (Eliot, *CP*: 64)

The woman's musings show the insignificance of the life of early 20th century women. Women like Mrs. Porter or her daughter, though they are ravished by lustful men, have no regret about it. But the situation was different in the past when women like Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid* chose death rather than life without love. But in modern period men and women maintain sexual relationship without love which is fully meaningless and futile.

Eliot further gives the episode of the typist girl and her "young man, carbuncular"--- in which the sense of frustration and boredom is skillfully exposed. In the evening time the typist-girl returns home from office and waits for her lover. They enjoy some time together but the girl feels indifferent after the sex act. Then she puts a record on the gramophone. While the event of the girl's and the young man's encounter unfolds, Tiresias witnesses it, throbbing with passion but unable to act. He is both man and woman, is blind and old, suggesting total impotency and a perversion of simple biological principles.

Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
(Eliot, *CP*: 61)

The typist-girl's lifestyle is totally mechanical just like her laying out foods in tins. The machine images of the taxi and the gramophone further suggest modern man's alienated life and his complete separation from the natural world:

When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone. (Eliot, *CP*: 62)

Eliot uses both Buddha's and St. Augustine's "The Fire Sermon" to strengthen his theme of spiritual degeneration of modern man, and possible restoration of the body's sanity through spiritual discipline. St. Augustine was the bishop of Hippo in Roman Africa from 396 to 430 and he was the dominant personality of the Western church of his time. He is generally recognized as having been the greatest thinker of Christian antiquity. His mind was like a crucible in which the religion of the New Testament was most completely mixed with the Platonic tradition of Greek philosophy. The knowledge of God and of the soul always remained from the time of his Baptism the one and only knowledge that he desired. He was assured that it is the task of a Christian philosophy to seek to know God through his image in the soul.

For Augustine the fall of man means that in all men the true order of love has been violated. Departing from the love of God above him, man has followed the love of self and is consequently subject to what is below him. Man has fallen by the act of his own will. The subjection of spirit to flesh is a slavery from which the perverted will has no power to deliver itself, just because it cannot will the deliverance. St. Augustine has been revered as a doctor of the church since the early Middle Ages. He argued that not only are all men involved in Adam's guilt and punishment but also that this involvement takes effect through the dependence of human procreation on the sexual passion, in which the spirit's inability to control flesh is evident.

In the fourth section of *The Waste Land*, "Death by Water," water is symbolized by Eliot as a means of purification and rebirth. The poem narrates the episode of Phlebas, the

young and handsome Phoenician sailor who was drowned as he was crossing the sea in pursuit of an overseas business. Phlebas, who represents the modern man, in the sense that he is driven entirely by the profit principle to the neglect of his soul, has no chance of rebirth because he had no desire to follow spiritual values. Through the episode of this sailor Eliot has shown that the decay of modern civilization is taking place because of man's rejection of higher values:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss. (Eliot, *CP*: 65)

After the sterility and futility of the typist-girl and the Thames daughters' episodes, "Death by Water" comes as a relief but in this section we find also the same images of futility and decay, and a description of the mechanical life led by the people of the waste land. The suggestion here is that people who submit themselves to worldly matters will be punished and swallowed by death. Their youth, strength and wealth will be totally useless to them. Through the Phoenician sailor, Phlebas, Eliot warns modern man again and again:

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth (Eliot, *CP*: 65)

Cleanth Brooks says,

The drowned Phoenician Sailor recalls the drowned god of the fertility cults. Miss Weston tells that each year at Alexandria an effigy of the head of the god was thrown into the water as a symbol of the death of the powers of nature, and that this head was carried by the current to Byblos where it was taken out of the water and exhibited as a symbol of the reborn god (T.S.Eliot: *The Waste Land; Casebook Series*, Cox and Hinchliffe: 148).

Phlebas is a prototype of modern businessman, caught in the whirlpool of activity and accounting, meets his death. But there is no one to mourn his death. His death is as uneventful as was his life, except that the poet can use him as an example of how even the most well equipped person can disappear from people's view and sink into oblivion. Through him Eliot seems to reflect on the futility of the whole material and commercial culture. Phlebas is linked with the Smyrna merchant and the profit and loss of traders. There is a reference to the mythical god of ancient Egypt, where an effigy of the fertility god was thrown into the sea at Alexandria to indicate his death. But the head was carried by the waves and at Byblos it was worshipped as the god re-born. Thus the poet has shown the contrast between the drowning of the effigy and that of Phlebas. In the case of this sailor though there is no re-birth because he has rejected moral values during his life. Through the death of Phlebas it is proved that the rejection of moral values is the cause of the inevitable decay of modern civilization.

The moral of the last section "What the Thunder Said" is expressed in the message uttered by thunder for the release of modern society from spiritual barrenness. Stephen Coote says about this section,

The title refers us to eastern religion; not, this time, to the insights of the Buddha, but to the moral guidance offered by the Hindu "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad." ... The suggestion in this Hindu gospel is that through "right action"--- giving, sympathy and self-control--- man may indeed go beyond his sterile world and hence revive the potency of the universe in which he lives (Coote: 44).

The suggestion here is that the ultimate peace of mankind has been adumbrated in ancient Upanishadic gospel. If mankind follows the truth the gospels contain, there is a chance that the deep spiritual thirst everyone suffers from will be lessened, and there will be a chance for salvation for the denizens of the waste land.

In this section Eliot also describes the events of Christ's arrest, trial and crucifixion. Though Christ was crucified, he is living forever through his religion. But modern man has killed Christ by his indifference towards religion. Modern man lives only in his body,

not in his soul. Eliot feels sad as modern men are dying and wasting away ever so slowly for their spiritual decline:

He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience (Eliot, *CP*: 66)

The poem refers to the mythical journey of Sir Parsifal and his followers in search of the Holy Grail. It was a journey full of hardships. Then there is the mention of the Biblical journey of Christ's disciples to Emmaus, where they were accompanied by Christ in disguise. The disciples believed that their saviour had left them and they were so confused that when the resurrected Christ returned to them, they could not recognize Him. Christ, being the hooded figure, helped His followers in their spiritual quest. But modern man is not influenced by such a noble and spiritual goal, as Eliot says:

Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
---But who is that on the other side of you? (Eliot, *CP*: 67)

George Williamson says,

The experience of agony and its doubt rise out of the physical conditions of this journey through *the Waste Land*, now the desert scene of part I which emphasizes the need of water. After observing "here is no water but only rock," the spirit is tortured by the desire of water and no rock,.... Physical and spiritual anguish distort his vision as he walks with the last shadow of his fortune, the Fisher King, once guardian of the Grail. Beside this unnamed figure he sees another, "gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded;" it is the Hanged Man or Christ. (Williamson: 148)

Both the disciples of Christ were doubtful about the truth of the report that the dead Christ had arisen from the grave. One of the disciples felt as if there was a third person with a head covered with hood walking along with them. And the third person was Christ himself--- duly resurrected --- who revealed his identity at the end of their journey. The

hooded Christ referred to Christ who helped the pilgrims on their spiritual journey. This incident also proves that though Christ was physically dead but still he lives through his religion. But the waste landers living in the modern age are not actually living, they are spiritually dead because they are far from their religion.

The image of a refugee woman who has tightened her long black hair and begun to play on her hair as if they were the strings of the fiddle is a haunting one. It reminds us of war, and how it displaces entire community in search of shelter. The destruction of lives, civilizations and all human values is evoked in striking images of falling cities as well as ruined lives of people. The music the refugee woman plays is sad. It is reminiscent of loss and ruin. The feeling of disconsolation and ruin is reinforced by the image of the bats with baby faces, which indicates that the civilization is in ruins. Along with this theme people also have no faith here, religion has been reduced to a mere ritual. The reference to the falling towers indicates both the loss of civilization and spiritual values that sustain a civilization, as it has happened in modern times:

Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal (Eliot, *CP*: 67)

The short, staccato lines give a vivid description of the destructions caused by the First World War. Millions of human beings moved madly to different parts of Europe. They marched without any hope or direction. The civilization that so proudly displayed the label "modern" had collapsed. Death and sufferings were everywhere. There is intense satire in the fact that though the routine continues, faith is no more there. This is the picture of the modern waste land.

The poem's survey of history and myth now turns from Western civilization to the civilization of India. The myth of *Prajapati* is evoked, taking the readers to an ancient time in India, when northern India suffered from drought and famine. People then prayed to *Prajapati* for help. The god answered their prayer by uttering three words through the

thunder. The three words were--- Da, Da ,Da that contain the secret of man's spiritual progress. The first "Da" means *Datta*--- to give oneself to a noble ideal. People with moral values have shown the way of spiritual goal. The second " Da" means *Dayadhvam*-- to sympathise. We must feel honestly for our fellow men, so we must leave our ego and isolation to work for the community. The third "Da" means *Damyata*--- self-control; which means discipline. It suggests that we must learn to control our passions and feelings.

In the closing lines the protagonist expresses his own personal feeling of hope. He does not want to be frustrated like modern man. He believes that the three remedies mentioned above can reform the world, but first he wants to reform himself, as he says:

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order? (Eliot, *CP*: 69)

His remedy is then compared to the cry of the mad Hieronymo in Kyd's Spanish Tragedy. He feels that some people will accept his suggestion as the cry of a mad man:

Hieronymo's mad againe.
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih (Eliot, *CP*: 69)

The Waste Land covers the history of not only of the modern west European civilization, but of the whole mankind. In fact, Eliot deals with the tragedy of human life--- the struggle of the values against the evil in man--- but he is quite hopeful about the situation. The Industrial Revolution had led man to the state of a mechanical being who only knows the materialistic values of life. Material progress changed the society and its time-tested values. As individuals searched for their own pleasures and comforts, family and community togetherness broke down. Isolation and alienation grew within human beings. There is a sense of insecurity everywhere in the modern society. This society is full of

falsehood, pretensions and hypocrisy. Even in the matter of love there is no real feeling. The relationship that prevails among men and women in this modern society is often another name for a selfish desire for possession. Genuine feelings and emotions have been largely replaced by the pernicious pleasure principle, which, ironically, leaves people unsatisfied and longing for more. This leads to further spates of desire, frustration, alienation, loneliness and finally, a break down of nerves. People are then seized by an existential fear, a nameless terror of extinction. Their mental picture is shadowed by the cruelty of the modern civilization. Eliot has very skillfully exposed dissatisfaction of life in all layers of society. Modern men substantially lack any sustaining moral values or religious faith. Not only men, but women, like the typist-girl or the daughters of Thames are indifferent about sexual activities. Social norms are fully broken down through sexual grossness. After the First World War the total picture of society changed. Everywhere there was decay and destruction. Besides, modern man's loss of religious faith has also led him to his doom. The life of modern man thus becomes futile and barren which is exposed through the poet's barren landscape of *The Waste Land*. Through Phlebas--- who resembles modern man with a materialistic outlook and a lack of spiritual balance in life-- - Eliot has shown how modern men become alienated and neurotic. Lastly, the poet suggests that if people to work in unity for the welfare of their lives and the society there may still be some hope of redemption. This message is also conveyed by the primordial "da" of the thunder.

The last section "What the Thunder Said" contains the substance of Eliot's thoughts. Eliot believes that the re-birth of civilization is possible only through faith and illustrates this point through the journey of the Knight through a barren landscape culminates in the cathedral set amid trembled graves where he has to encounter his deepest fears and anxieties. Another story of the pilgrims and the hooded Christ shows also how faith can lead to success. In the closing lines, Eliot strikes a personal note and wishes to find out a remedy or a reform of spiritually decadent society. Eliot has referred to the ancient Indian history of famine and draught only to find out the solution of the predicament modern man finds himself. The poet, like Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, sat on the shore of life fishing for solutions:

Shall I at least set my lands in order? (Eliot, *CP*: 69)

As European civilization was collapsing, Eliot wanted to start the re-construction first with the individual. The first remedy is derived from Dante which is self-purification which means willing acceptance of suffering for self-reform. The second remedy is taken from a Latin lyric in which the poet finds the nightingale and the swallow singing with great joy. The secret of their joy lies in spiritual discipline. The third remedy is derived from a French sonnet. A complete detachment from worldly possessions is an important condition for spiritual re-birth. Through these remedies Eliot has suggested the possible reformation of the entire society.

(V) Neurotics at Large

The modern men in Eliot's poems are the victims of a commercially driven industrial society. As industrialization reached even in the rural settings of the west by the beginning of the 20th century, the whole social landscape saw a drastic change. The rise of wealth and the material and consumer culture one associates with industrialization created deep differences in society, splitting it into urban-rural affluent-indigent segments, between whom gaps began to grow wider with each passing year. The whole social code is reversed. The increasingly commercialized society drew a sharp line between classes. There is any such split-society a lack of compassion for others and self-centered individuals carry the corpses of frustration and futility within themselves. They are isolated from each other and which is even worse, from their inner selves. Eliot poignantly describes such isolation and communication gaps in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady".

There are also the signs of emptiness in Eliot's poems. In "Gerontion" and "Sweeney", Eliot presents modern man's meaningless existence. In *The Waste Land*, the landscape is barren and futile reflecting the crippled situation of the civilization. In "The Hollow Men", there is a race of people who by all means represent the modern men and women. This strange race of people walk over the barren landscape of *The Waste Land*, and carry the anxiety disorder and nervous tension of Prufrock. In a frustrating manner they have sex like animals without any love. The recollecting mind of "Gerontion" thinks of utopian days, but in his life, he is yet another reflection of the hollow men. In "The Hollow Men," Eliot has tried to portray the image of modern men as a race who carry empty faces, empty bodies and empty minds. This horrifying picture only heightens the unease that neurotics are running free and the whole mankind has become disoriented, confused and out of tune with reality. There is little hope to save it from its doom. "The Hollow Men" is perhaps the most pessimistic of all the poems of Eliot. In this poem the poet reflects on the human nature and the relationship between this world and the other, the world of death and the world of eternity. When we read the poem we get the feeling of gloom and darkness as it gathers in death's other kingdom. The hollow men are devoid of faith, of personality, of moral strength and, above all, of humanity. The poet comments on the

contemporary life through the life-style of the hollow men. The poem records the endless horror and hopelessness of modern life. In *The Waste Land* Eliot has skillfully shown the barrenness of modern life although at last he gives some hope but in a sense of emptiness is nevertheless thoroughly exposed.

From the beginning the hollow men lament the loss of activity. The hollow men, spiritually barren, are representation of the 20th century civilization. They accept their own sterility and, like the waste landers, cannot hope for a re-birth. Because they are not the men of action like Mistah Kurtz or Guy Fawkes, who are famous or infamous for their desperate evil act, they call themselves "stuffed men (Eliot, *CP*: 79). They do not have any will power to follow the men of action. They lead a meaningless and futile routine which may be described as death-in-life. Eliot compares them with the effigies of Guy Fawkes which are fit only to be burnt:

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion; (Eliot, *CP*: 79)

In the second section the hollow men express their fear of death. The world in which the hollow men live is like a dream world, but it is only an illusion. The reality is that this world is one of pernicious debilitation where human will suffers a paralysis. Eliot mentions two kingdoms of death--- one is death's other world, and the other is death's dream kingdom. The first world is the realm of life after death and the second one is that of spiritual death--- the state in which the hollow men live. The protagonist represents the modern man who is afraid of facing the eyes of Charon--- the mythical Ferryman, who sends the souls of the dead to the other world. He would rather choose to wear deliberate disguises as we see put on the scare-crow which moves only to the direction of the wind. These hollow men also have no individual thoughts of their own. Their condition is so bad that they are afraid of the realities of life as well as that of death. Their condition reminds us of Prufrock again who always tries to avoid reality and is unable to face the reality of death. Prufrock, is doubtful about his condition and develops a low self esteem. He repeats himself, and other symptoms of a mild neurosis, which nevertheless promise to grow more as his condition stagnates. In the same way the hollow men are also

suffering from self-doubt and low self-esteem. They too feel the sharp edges of reality and retreat into a make-believe world of disguises that would hide them from reality. They cannot face either the reality of life or of death and Eliot thus shows their predicament:

Let me be no nearer
In death's dream kingdom
Let me also wear
Such deliberate disguises
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves
In a field
Behaving as the wind behaves
No nearer--- (Eliot, *CP*: 80)

The narrator of "The Hollow Men" is so passive that he would rather disguise himself as a scare-crow or as a rat running on dead grass than to face the world of action. He likes to avoid the responsibilities of life and feels content in this kind of life. The hollow men are so much cowards that they feel quite happy with their condition of life-in-death like the waste landers.

In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, considered by many to be a sourcebook of many of Eliot's ideas and images, different kinds of people go to different regions. And all these regions have landscapes that reflect their spiritual state or their existentialist predicament. In "The Hollow Men" the suggestion is that this passive group of people are only fit for "Limbo" as they are rejected by both Heaven and Hell because of their purposelessness and indecision. The hollow men cannot come out of the circle they are living in and the narrator states the condition of his fellow people. The hollow men cannot live in the past or in the future, therefore they are condemned to live only in the present.

In the third part of "The Hollow Men" Eliot shows that the world of the hollow men is unproductive and dead like the cactus land. The men themselves worship stone images

which represent worldly things. These hollow men are devoid of any spiritual guidance. Instead of the light of the sun, a fading star guides them:

Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star. (Eliot, *CP*: 80)

The image of fading star which we found in the second part is again mentioned here. The image reminds us that the hollow men are unable to change their lives from the shadow of the light. This image warns us that modern civilization is dying. In the dead land where these hollow men live, only stone images are put up. These idols are worshipped by the hollow men. Under the light of a fading star, these stone images receive prayers from the dead men--- in other words the hollow men. The whole construct refers to the idea that in the modern waste land, stone images are worshipped by men and women who are spiritually dead, because they have no religious faith or sustained moral values. The hollow men have no spiritual guidance like the light of the sun, instead they are guided by a "fading star."

In the fourth part of the poem the hollow men appear to be in total despair. Like the waste landers, they have lost their faith and are left with an uncertain, dark future. They are denied any vision of greatness and wholeness, as their life is fragmented, disjointed. Their world is full of darkness, and is devoid of grace. They lead a life in isolation like a single piece of broken-jaw which has been cut out from the entire human body:

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms (Eliot, *CP*: 81)

George Williamson says,

In action the hollow men now 'grope together And avoid speech,' gathered on the banks of the swollen river which must be crossed to "death's other kingdom" Without any eyes at all they are without any vision, unless "the eyes" return as the "perpetual" But for empty men this is only a hope. (Williamson: 158-159)

The hollow men lead a life without any purpose. In this last place of meeting they have no chance to achieve anything. They cannot even hope of divine grace because they are not worthy of it. As against the "perpetual star" that represents divine grace, they are only left with the "dying star" that symbolizes the dying civilization. They can merely hope that Virgin Mary would appear to them and give them proper guidance to death's other kingdom. And with this pious hope these inactive men move in darkness.

In the last part of the poem it is clear again that the hollow men are very different from others in their attitude as they go round the prickly pear instead of the mulberry tree. This movement also signifies their drifting nature without any aim. The hollow men live in the shadow of doubt and fear. This shadow also refers to the anxiety of death. They are incapable of translating their ideas into action. They are cowardly and hollow within, and cannot even utter the words of prayer for divine help. Like the typist-girl of *The Waste Land* they feel tired, exhausted and lifeless--- all these make their life long and indecisive. In this state of frustration and fear their only way to save themselves appears to be praying to God sincerely for strength:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow (Eliot, *CP*: 81-82)

The hollow men are low-spirited and so their world ends not with shouting but with the lamentations of the dying soul. Guy Fawkes, the notorious man of action wanted to end the world. But the world did not end, instead, his effigy is routinely burnt every year ---

which indicates the failure of the hollow men. The poem appears to end with the impression that the godless state of modern society can only sink further into a moral abyss. There is little hope of salvation for the modern men and women who walk around hollow, empty and without any substance. In this final image, "The Hollow Men" is one of the most poignant reflections of the state of the 20th century western Europe.

Conclusion

In the discussion above, efforts have been made to show the symptoms of alienation and neurosis in some of Eliot's poems. Almost all the characters in Eliot are the victims of an urban civilization gone wrong, as a result of which cities breed alienation and isolation, and feelings of being loss, rejection and abandonment. These characters develop a sort of neurotic behaviour that results from the complexities and anxieties of the modern city. The city itself is a problem for the modern man at the threshold of growing industrialization and intensification of production activities. In Eliot's poems, there are characters and themes that match the morbidity of the crippling modern society that is so eloquently reflected in *The Waste Land*.

In each of the poems that has been discussed there are characters who are alienated from the society and also from their own selves. Eliot has shown in each poem that modern men and women suffer from a lack of communication and thus become alienated. Their loneliness causes hazards to their physical and mental condition that may, in extreme cases, lead to neurosis. It can be said that modernization is helpful for us as well as harmful at the same time because millions of people now suffer from different types of mental illness due to the complexities of modern life. In *Prufrock* we can see that the protagonist has lost the spontaneity of life as it happens in "Portrait of a Lady" too. In both cases the protagonists are lonely, driven figures who have no clear sense of direction in life. Indeed in a community where each man keeps to himself, one cannot easily communicate with others and they cannot relax themselves. Such an atmosphere of mental suffocation takes people to the point of neurosis. *Prufrock* is a modern man who is a victim of urbanization and is slowly driven to a life of loneliness and alienation. This loneliness causes different mental complications within him and he becomes neurotic. Besides, his indecisive nature creates tension in his mind and he cannot easily cope up with the situation before him. On the other hand, the young man in the "Portrait of a Lady" is a solitary modern man, who cannot accept the invitation of love from the opposite sex. Both *Prufrock* and the young man display an inability to think deeply about the decision to accept love as a natural process.

Eliot deals with common themes that are expressed in different poems in different modes. Eliot is so much moved by the downward slide of modern civilization that this influence is persistent in most of his poems. He is, depressed and disillusioned by his time and history. He is by his heritage, a misfit in the early 20th century world. Eliot has always been a traditionalist, and was pre-eminently concerned with urban life, especially the life in big cities. And this aspect is found in his major poems. The city people like Prufrock, Sweeney and Gerontion are representatives of corrupt, rotten and money-grabbing materialistic civilization. A description of the barrenness and futile life-style of modern people can be found in Gerontion where the old man realizes his empty existence. He has no hope at all and like the hollow men he cannot expect for divine grace because he has no religious faith. Through Gerontion's character Eliot has shown that modern man has lost Christ because of his neglect, indifference and lack of faith in religion. Gerontion thus lives in utter darkness just like the hollow men. Even the lovers in Eliot's poetry are greatly disillusioned where love degenerates into lust. Lovers like Prufrock will have to spend their whole life-span alone for their inability to utter love for their beloved. Besides these common themes Eliot also deals with the inner states of mind and the system of values. That has become dysfunctional in our time. He not only deals with subtle human emotions but also with the subconscious desires. He uses the dramatic monologue in order to analyze the state of the mind or the conflicts within. "Gerontion" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" are the studies of different states of mind. The problem of isolation of the individual from others is echoed in "Portrait of a Lady," where the young man is prone to nervous tension and does not know how to hide his feelings. Like a psychoanalyst, Eliot tries to throw light on the darkest areas of the mind, and attempts to find a solution for the debilitating maladies of the mind.

The inhabitants of the modern waste land, as Eliot so painstakingly shows in *The Waste Land*, are spiritually barren and dead. The urban setting of his poem provides a haunting background to the psychodramas that he unravels and the slow degeneration of the soul of the modern man. Eliot calls London the unreal city because it has no vitality and substance. It must be said that *The Waste Land* is a social document of our time, a poem which throws light on the problems of modern civilization. In the modern age, spiritual paralysis has overtaken man. Due to urbanization, commercial interests, mechanical and

technological progress man's faith in religion, his moral values and individual development have diminished. Eliot finds the root causes of the cultural and moral decay of cities in the crass commercialization of life where everything is for sale. Even in the matter of love, a profit-loss principle seems to operate --- a throwback of the pervasive consumerism of our time. Through his poems Eliot refers to the universal tragedy of man, his spiritual sterility and lack of faith and character. Another reason for the decay of modern civilization is sexual perversion. In the past, loss of chastity was considered worse than death for a girl. But in the modern age sex has become a mechanical routine. A solution may lie in bringing both these mechanical responses to a human level. The typist girl after the sex-act looks at the mirror mechanically and puts a record on the gramophone. Sex today has become an animal urge without any moral or social commitment. Thus the modern man has gone far from the spiritual way has ended up leading a barren and futile life.

Eliot is however not entirely without hope. Eliot's hopeful note is echoed in *The Waste Land*. Here in the first four sections Eliot shows the miserable plight of modern men and women and their suffering. But at the end find they find hope through the successful journey of Sir Parsifal to the Chapel Perilous, and the utterance of the thunder heightens this feeling. One must say that Eliot is not only a poet but also a reformer of this barren modern society. At last it must also be said that if modern man can follow the way of regeneration so forcefully spelt out by the thunder in "What the thunder Said" then his life may regenerate, and civilization may lift itself out of the morass to which it had sunk, and the neurosis and anxieties of the modern man may finally be remedied.

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