

# Major Themes in T.S. Eliot

## Abstract

The predicament of modern man in Eliot's poetry the restlessness and the purposelessness the dedoublement and split-personality- spiritual aridity and the squalor of city life- refuge to the Redrock.

This is the way through which philosophy advance, so also Eliot text has had the same strain if consistent questioning and persistent answering which serves as focal theme in his poems. Whenever we try to assess as to what Eliot reckons as the basic themes in his poetry, we are amazed to see that there are multi- dimensional meaning behind the apparent theme in the texts. There is, no doubt the problematic twentieth century be become the most significant focus in his poetry.

**Keywords:** Dedoublement, Botched, Pressure, Anthologies, Unfurl, Portrays, Purposelessness, Paradox, Fragmentary, Ostensibly.

## Introduction

As is started in the opening paragraph Eliot's Focus Rather theme of his poetry Changes with the Changing time. we have in the early poems the problematic twentieth century as the Focal theme together with the nightmarish experience of city life the purpose lessens and nothingness of modern men, the shift of Focus can be traced in the poems of 1920's where disintegration moral vacuity, nothingness and Futility of existence has been limited with deft and subtle care.

Our Focus in this Chapter would be to bring out the underlying theme in Eliot text in the light of post- Structural reading that is, to bring out the plurality of thought working in a Single poem and in the dominant themes, we will assess,

Chronologically, taking from "Prufrock and Other Observation" to "poems of 1920 " and the after math activity and poet's Relate it to the total design of the poet's, multifarious vision. Twentieth Century it will be very hard to comprehend the Complex and indeterminate network of themes in Eliot's poetry.

The poem in Eliot's First Volume "Prufrock and other observation " [1917], indeed objectify an atmosphere of aimlessness and of the futility of life. We can reach to a certain bent of mind when we are able to take a close look to the poems of the first voloume. It seems that prufrock is a kind of an observer who sees life with distance, watches the curve of vicissitudes in society, records the graph of degeneration and disintegration : the death, decay and destruction large on every front of the society. The ironies in the themes and twists of responses and attitudes echo 'Laforgue', 'Corbiere', 'Verlaine' and 'Gautier'. The sense of squalor, depair and boredom, the viscosity of the past from which the limbo world of the present cannot escape, connect with 'Dante' and 'Baudelaire'. The swift change of moods, the sharp confrontation of past and present of the common place and the horrible constitute a meaningful innovation which Eliot brought to the world of poetry.

For Eliot, experience presented itself in an intensely realized but desperate series of components which could not possibly be organized in to longer structures by the power of intellect or by relying on popular literary forms. But the possessed an extra ordinary ability, which operated below the level of consciousness and synthesized the fragments.

## Aim of the Study

All these poems in "PruFrock and Other Observations" (1917) and "Poems of 1920" altogether depicts botched civilization in its actual form and pressure through Eliot's use of Sheer intellect, imagination and various form of visual expressions. As a student, I was first attracted to T.S. Eliot when I studied "The Love Song of J. Alfred PruFrock; in my post graduations. Gradually I have tried ever since to vindicate, rather delve deep into the oeuvre of Eliot, from it genesis to exodus. The various shades of images and symbols, together with myth and allusions



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compelled me to give my days and night to Eliot Poems. Since then, I discovered meanings galore in his texts, in his syntaxes and in each lines. Till now, thousands of critics touched Eliot texts and wrote millions of lives on Eliot.

#### **Review of Literary**

1-Sep-2016, The First poem of this period and the first of Eliot's Important works, was "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", which appeared in poetry in 1915. His First book of poems, Prufrock and Other Observation, Followed in 1917, and the collection established Eliot as a leading poet of this day.

1-Aug-2017, The 10 most renowned poems of British Writer T.S. Eliot including Prufrock, Preludes, The waste Land etc.

In this connection one can simply say that Eliot is not, in Principle, doing anything different from Chaucer or Spenser or even Shakespeare. His use of literary sources is both existential and aesthetic, helping him understand and express his own experience, which was a very sensitive modern mind's experience of a haunted world-a-world haunted by ghosts of different types trapping man helplessly in an isolation of unreality like that of the schizophrenics. As for as the research methodology is concerned, I do firmly believe that literature is beyond any sort of methodology; yet some measures, some rules and regulations must be followed at the time of synthesis. My journey from the hypothesis to the actual thesis requires some concrete steps to shape the thesis quite differently from the rest of the critics. First of all, I should collect the texts of Eliot, then authenticate texts that will enrich me learn the significance of each and every comma, full stops and dots in between the lines. Likewise, criticisms of Eliot are galore on libraries like questia.com and Google search. Collection of books on Eliot and a proper study and synthesis of all the materials chapter wise certainly help me in my endeavour to write the thesis diligently.

I have deliberately chosen the topic on image and symbols in Eliot for image, word-pictures and symbols are very much significant, rather the core to Eliot's Poetry. All the lines are loaded with the visual form of expression that transformed the text into indeterminate array of multiplex and complex meanings. Through the image and symbols my effort will be to bring out the dedoublement, rootlessness, purposelessness, spiritual aridity and the ravaged civilization to which the poets points recurrently. I hope I shall be able to stabilize the destabilized in Eliot and give a new dimension to the open ended lines of T.S. Eliot.

Critics like Bernard, Bergonzi, Ronald Bush, C.B. Cox, Robert Crawford, Helen Gardner, Nancy Gish, Louis Monand, B. Rajan etc. explored Eliot poems to its Fullest possibilities. The open ended texts of Eliot also made me study anthologies, especially "PruFrock and other Observation" 1917 and "Poems of 1920's not only the poems, the critical essays of Eliot too, are so reflective and symbolical that one cannot avoid reading even his criticism. Presently, I have read only one anthology of T.S. Eliot deeply, that is "PruFrock and other Observation" 1917 and

pursuing my studies to pointed directions to unfuri the deeper level of signification in Eliot's texts.

The anthology "PruFrock and other Observation" (1917) has twelve poems that may be seen as a sequel to each other. Each of the poem portrays a different world view, yet brings out the same note of purposelessness meaninglessness of life and the cyclic journey that a modern man has set out to be. The interesting point as well as the central paradox of Eliot's poem is that all the twelve poems are posed in such a way that expose an altogether a different, disjointed, fragmentary view of life in general; all are different, yet all are the same in its own unique way and here the paradox of T.S. Eliot's poem.

Similarly, "Portrait of a Lady", is ostensibly, the poem about a young man, the narrator, and his visit to an older woman in the course of the year. The passage of time is carefully marked-December, April, August, October. As in "PruFrock", in "Portrait of a Lady" Eliot gives again a critique of romanticism. Music is used ironically in the poem to undercut the romantic and idealist association that it has in symbolist poetry and in Laforgue. The poem ends on an equivocal note. Arnold's language is played off against the world of politeness, artificiality and role playing, when human relationships are considered as game.

There is an obsessive erosion of moral and spiritual sanction in the life of man, who has refused to believe in the reality of an invisible world. No law of justice, human or divine, reigns supreme. For him there is no life after death. He has, indeed, entered upon a period of human history in which the image of God is entirely fading away from the minds of men and any religion Which includes the idea of a transcendent God has become irrelevant or obsolescent except as a form of escapism for the ignorant the faint hearted and the obscurantist. Virginia woolf said: 'on or about December 1910 human nature changed'. This is a vivid hyperbole through which virginia woolf tried to suggest that there was a a frightening discontinuity between the traditional past and the shaken present. The usual morality becomes counter feit; taste, a genteel indulgence and tradition, a weariness. Assessing doubt as a form of health the modernist culture mockingly suspends all accredited values, strips men of his systems of belief and ideal and proposes a uniquely modern style of salvation by, of and for the self, this is an extreme form of subjectivity with filial dependence on romanticism, but declaring itself as an inflation of the self, a transcendental and orgiastic aggrandizement of matter and event on behalf of personal vitality. This kind of solipsism has been expressed by the. German poet Gottfried Benn When he writes that 'There is no outer reality, there is only human consciousness constantly. building, modifying, rebuilding new worlds out of its own creativity. 'Behind all these manifestation of confusion and uncertainty lurks a deep sense of historical impasse based on the assumption that something about tie experience of this age is unique and catatrophic. The novelist 'Herman Hesse' has spoken 'about a whole

## *Remarking An Analisation*

generation caught between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standards, no security, no simple acquiescence. Moreover, the preparation of the first world war, the scientific discoveries by Darwin, Plank, Psychological explorations by Freud, Jung, Adler- all contributed to the complex natures of the age. The emerging utilitarianism, Capitalistic hegemony, the theory of 'laissez faire', advent of industrialization and trade unionism made the scene more deplorable. But Eliot's response to the fragmentation and chaos of his age was an 'I' essentially moral and spiritual one. In the early poems he just throws the problem and the respite is seen at the last phase of his literary career. For Eliot, the answer for the deracination and alienation of modern life was a religious one. In 1931 he wrote:

"The world is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail, but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time; So that the faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the world from suicide."

These words throw significant light on Eliot's aim in his works and the underlying theme in the later poems. Because, having protested against modern waste land, Eliot set about 'redeeming the time', attempting ceaselessly, through his poetry, prose and plays, to present ideas, ideas which became more and more plainly Christian as his life and career progressed in a form acceptable to 'civilized but non-Christian mentality'. This attempt finally emerges as a pattern- a positive pattern of unremitting quest for the Christian tradition. The final concept involves most, if not all, of all the major ideas of Eliot. It will be "found that his ideas about tradition, order, reality, art and language, expressed in both his prose and poetry, are repeated and extended until all are integrated in his supreme concern for the Christian tradition. Man's intuitive reasoning and wisdom lead towards and is completed by religious comprehension. In Eliot the attempt for artistic redemption raises urgent moral and religious problems and his art ultimately becomes a kind of spiritual exercise.

### **Theme**

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### **Conclusion**

All the indeterminacy in the treatment of theme and his religious preoccupation in the later years of his career due to the philosophical training at Harvard and, a dissatisfaction with contemporary life and secular history. He absorbed in himself the traits of unitarianism but raised high to the thought professed in unitarianism in order to impart objectivity in his poetry which is a cherished desire of Eliot. The thought of Santayana and Babbitt, Royce and Bradley help forming his speculations. Bradley's 'Absolute' has a deep impression on his mind and help forming his themes at various levels of signification. It will be seen, then, that Eliot did not completely reject nor accept either Bergson or Maurras; Babbitt or Santayana; Royce or Bradley. Each seems to have counteracted the influence of the other and all continued to provide a basis for Eliot's preoccupations. The conflicting pulls that they exercised on his sensibility epitomize the lifelong tensions that he experienced between a fascination with the forces of the flux and a consequent compulsion to assert the need for subjugating those forces. Eliot continued to grapple with these unresolved conflicts throughout his life, which overtly makes its presence felt in his succeeding themes.

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