THE MEANINGLESSNESS OF THE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH REFERENCE TO T.S. ELIOT’S
THE WASTE LAND

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ABSTRACT

This paper explains the changing human relationships due to the changes that have happened recently. I will utilize three types of relationships, love, marriage and homosexual relationship that T.S.Eliot mobilized in the poem The Waste Land .It is through the sections of the poem each particular episode delineates one fact about the trivial and unsuccessful relationship .The representation of these relationships is unproductive and unfruitful.

Keywords: The Meaningless Relationships, Love relationship, Marriage relationship, and homosexual relationship.

The Meaningless Relationship:

In the Modernized and materialistic societies that lack hope and a sense of significance, various aspects of life have lost their meaning and have been reduced to trivial and superficial thing. One aspect during the modern epoch is represented in T.S.Eliot’s The Waste Land 1922 ‘The unproductive relationships “in the modern society that are dry, lifeless and sterile .This theme is one of the recurring subjects that T.S.Eliot tried to expose and criticize in most of his literary works .The modern society sufferers the lack of real love,lack of communication between the individuals in a close distance.

As Abusufian mentioned in an essay about the second part of The Waste Land “A game of Chess where we experience sexual abuse and lifeless relationship between lover and beloved, similarly between husband and wife” (Abusufain.2014:vol:III.003)
The way of life as Popalwski described it “The popular image of the 1920’s as a care –free, frivolous ,even anarchic “Jazz age , is partly coloured by the popular image of the American 1920’s when America began to exert a strong influence on British and European popular culture”.

(Popalwski,2008:542/543)

Young generation was not after the spiritual and mutual feeling; rather they were after fun and enjoyment of the moment. The relationships are meaningless and empty as Eliot wrote these lines and shows the need for an answer:

Speak to me. Why do you never speak? 
"What are you thinking of? what think-ing? what
"I never know what you are thinking – think”

(Eliot,1922:p20.112/114)

The speaker of these lines is unable to communicate with the person he is speaking to, this failure in communication reflects the isolation and the scarcity of connection that characterize the relationship within the delusional and dismal modern society. In other example of the indifference in and the apathy of the relationship is displayed again by Eliot:

What is that noise? what is the wind doing ?
Nothing again nothing
“ You know nothing ? Do you see nothing ?
Do you remember?
“Nothing”


The speaker repeat the words here with a sense of negation and nothingness to reflect the nature of apathy “You know nothing” this phrase expresses the indifference towards the partner the other one “Do you remember” also show that the speaker questioned the partner’s ability to recall the times they both spent together .While on the other hands these lines suggest a sense of chaos and obscure the meaning of potentially unequivocal expression; the speaker is unable to communicate anything articulate and meaningful through his description of relationships and communication. Eliot demonstrate that one of the social effects of the war is the lack of harmony and community and the ultimate isolation of the individual resulting from the sense of despair and futility in the midst of the desolation of modern Europe.

There was a change in the purpose of relationships before love is glorified and for a noble reason like that one ends in marriage and eventually concluded in procreation .The new love relationships are less romantic rather it is for self-centered pleasure. The conversation between the woman about the return of Albert and his wife that is suffering that her relationship is on the line with him because of hair fainting looks and the bad teeth she didn’t change them according to his recommendations, as she had spent the money specified for that reason on contraception bills. This incident leads to another example of marriage relationships as Lil is tired of being pregnant again .The upper class woman talk to her asking why did you marry if you are not interested in children.
The characters in this Poem lack the satisfaction and there was also a change in the modes of relationships as McGann describes “Eliot’s women live sterile lives with synthetic comforts and sex that substitute for love”


As the landscape of Europe became waste and barn so are the human relationships become infertile, the effects of war carnage on the cities of Europe and the major capitals were so devastating, same effects were laid upon the mentality of the individuals and the society.

A look at T.S.Eliot masterpieces can help with a better understanding of the changing relationships and the coldness that the modern man has undergone with the start of the modern era, particularly at the beginning of the twentieth century. This kind of relationships are so dangerous and they are the outlets of the disturbed and the constant wars here and there, the extended need for a completion for dominance in the crooked way to have resources like the policy of imperialism and capitalism. The Globalization that the world is witnessing recently is a continuation and modification for the aforesaid competitive activates that exhausted the modern man.

No single relationship in The Waste Land is fertile and generative as in lil’s and Albert the relationship is drab and not after children and the seduction of the typist reflects the indifference and apathy of the typist. The sexual encounter in The Fire Sermon “ of The Waste Land Eliot wrote the following:

“The time is propitious, as he guesses
The meal is ended; she is bored and tired,
Endeavourers to engage her in caresses Which still are unreproved, if undesired Flushed and decided, he assaults at once
And makes a welcome of indifference

(Eliot, 1922: 235/242.p33)

This was the description of the sexual encounter between the typist and the young clerk as a substantial instance of the apathy and the indifference displayed by the succumbed typist to the lustful young clerk. In carless if not undesired emotion she reluctantly stooped to a folly. This lustful man represent the sexual chaos and the infertility of the relationships that have gone more mundane than love in a real sense. This incident of undesired sex act adds more to the stream of female’s agony, the subjugated female perspective which is apparent in the voice of narrative, though Eliot was accused in excluding woman from his poetry. The typist was abused in same way Lil is oppressed by the social dogma of the male centered society and that presser on the voice of the upper class woman who was talking to her in the restaurant, and tells her that her relationship or marriage life is on the stack if she don’t beautify her look.

The abusive acts in the section of The Game of chess when the daughters are playing nearby the Thames were sexually seduced.

An third type of human relationship is the abnormal relationship due to the sexual perversion that resulted in the futility and sterility between individuals in the modern society. As Eliot used the a Greek Prophet...
to tell the incident in his poem *The wasteland* he described him as

“...Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between this lives, Old man with wrinkled female breasts can see”.

(Eliot, 1922:218/219.p31)

The physical appearance of Eliot’s persona can easily reflect the pervert society. The character of Mr. Egendise the homosexual merchant that the speaker once went with to a hotel of trysts, this reference made the idea of the homeopathic very clear. All the mentioned relationships are ineffective, cold and sterile ones that produce no life no communication. Eliot’s literary works helped the scholars to see how fragile these relationships. In the modern world man is struggling but his attempts are fragmented and randomly failing as Pondrom mentioned in her notes about the wasteland “about failure to chive union_ with an absolute another self, an object for knowledge, and with culture tradition _and fragmentation is the ultimate condition” (Pondrom, 2005:427) the idea of fragmentation is not only in the structure of the poem but also it help us understand man’s in ability to cope with another individuals or objects and even knowledge around him.

**Conclusion:**

As the world is moving ahead with the technological and industrial advancement human relationship is in a reverse movement. The relations are trivialized and mechanized due to the misunderstanding and carelessness. Another thing that helped to damage the human relationship is the class-distinction and completion in the work environment. I believe that T.S. Eliot was able to propagate the habits of the modern man and his failure to initiate a mutual understanding for many reasons as Eliot elucidated.

The works of T.S. Eliot can be seen as a panorama for the wrongful relationships and the false connections among the modern individuals. Throughout a better reading and analyzing of T.S. Eliot *The Waste Land* one can understands the ambiguities that were set in the aftermath of the World war I era.

**Works Cited**


