

Doesn't matter



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Why do you think T. S. Eliot combines elements from such a geographically, historically, and linguistically wide variety of cultural, literary, and spiritual settings to portray the modern world in *The Waste Land*?

*The Waste Land* (1922), the most influential modernist poem by T S Eliot, has been significantly noted for combining the various elements from such a geographically, historically, and linguistically wide variety of cultural, literary, and spiritual settings to portray the modern world. The presentation of the modern human situation in a culturally problematic world is the main purpose of the poet who skilfully illustrates the universal characteristic of the human condition in the modern world through the geographically, historically, and linguistically wide variety of cultural, literary, and spiritual settings. Thus, the poem attains a universal appeal and nature which mainly worked in favour of the piece which is now considered as the most effective touchstone of modern literature. The poet resorts to a complex method of incorporating culturally, geographically, historically, spiritually, and linguistically distinct settings to deal with the most complex theme of the modern world. The essential method used by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, according to Cleanth Brooks, is “ the principle of complexity. The poet works in terms of surface parallelisms which in reality make ironical contrasts, and in terms of surface contrasts which in reality constitute parallelisms.”

(Brooks) The employment of such a wide variety of setting can be best comprehended as part of the poet’s specific method of illustrating the complex nature of the modern world through a complex method.

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot concentrates on dealing with the primary theme of the modern world situation and the particular settings, images, and symbols used by the poet help him in this attempt. Rather than demonstrating the

thinner side of the modern situation of the world, offering a single, unambiguous meaning to the poem, the poet provides opportunity for multiple interpretations and meanings. The various symbols, which are drawn from a variety of settings, correspond to the dramatized instances of the theme, exemplifying in their own nature the basic paradox of the theme. Therefore, the manifold settings and symbols of the poem help in the development of the basic themes of the poem. Eliot's themes are drawn from the various ages, settings, and contexts, and, hence, the use of various settings enhances the appeal of the themes. "Eliot's theme is not the statement of a faith held and agreed upon nor is it the projection of a 'new' system of beliefs. Eliot's theme is the rehabilitation of a system of beliefs, known but now discredited." (Brooks) An analysis of the various themes of the poem best justifies the method employed by the poet.

The poem, written during the post World War I period, emphasizes the representation of the world as it really is. Therefore, a profound analysis of the modern world situation can be most useful in understanding the themes of the novel. "The Waste Land, Eliot's first long philosophical poem, can now be read simply as it was written, as a poem of radical doubt and negation, urging that every human desire be stilled except the desire for self-surrender, for restraint, and for peace." (Hay) Eliot has been effective in illustrating the exact situation in the world and, in order to portray this world, he combines elements from a geographically, historically, and linguistically wide variety of cultural, literary, and spiritual settings. The universal nature of the themes and the aspects of the poem seems to be best explaining the use of different settings.

#### Works Cited

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Brooks, Cleanth. On The Waste Land. Modern American Poetry. 14 Dec. 2008. .

Hay, Eloise Knapp. On The Waste Land. Modern American Poetry. 14 Dec. 2008. .