



Imagery as Language - A Critique on the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot

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ABSTRACT

According to Stephen King, "Imagery does not occur on the writers' page; it occurs in the readers mind. To describe everything is to supply a photograph in words to indict the points which seems the most vivid and important to you, the writer, is to allow the reader flush out our sketch into a portrait".

This paper is an explanation of imagery as a language which was used by T.S.Eliot in his selected poems: *Journey of the Magi and four quarters*. I have included the History of Imagery. I have analyzed some of his poetries too. Keeping this in my mind, I demonstrated the potential meanings of each poetries in the base of imagery. Secondly, I compared his 2 main poems "*Journey of the Magi and Four Quartets*" to criticize.

Keywords: Imagery, language, Poet, Poetry.

Introduction

Imagery is called the elements of poems that spark off the senses. But 'Image' is a synonym of picture and it is used in poems to give not only the senses but poetic writing.

Example:

Ken Smith's "Praise of Vodka" having "The taste of aim of wind on fields, the wind through the long-wet forest." Imagists found the importance of Imagery in 20'th century. They used imagery in a language as much as possible.

Eliot s an Imagist

Ezra pound's Imagist theory and T.S.Eliot's objective correlative.

- Jessica Masters.

Good example of Eliot's imagery work is 'The Waste Land'. It included the disjointed imagery and aesthetic strategy of the direct presentational objective images and problems which are created by these strategies.

Eliot's creation of the 'Fisher King' was his model to create "The Waste Land" Eliot used multiples of Imagery in "The Waste Land"

Example:

Water Imagery

Fire Imagery

Combie Crowds

The Themes River

Keys and Prisons

Thunder

Popular Music and



Tarot cards

But I wonder it's the poetic tool which was used in "The Waste Land" is, 'Zombie Crowd'.

In lines 62 – 68, were Eliot really sank his teeth into the image of 'zombie crowd', described the crowd of people that "flowed over London Bridge, so many" (62).

Here I am describing about imagery used in "Journey of the Magi" and "Four Quartets"

Journey of the Magi as an Imagery Poem

In this poem, Eliot emerged the link of his earlier and later works. There are so many patterns of Eliot's, they are styled in tension: Light and Dark, Water and acidity. Eliot's early poems were not like that, they were explained in hot sun light seeming to drive people towards spiritual isolation and darkness.

"Journey of the Magi" also begins in such darkness only. Even those Magi, their guides deserted them and they meet hostilities in the way. Although the travel of the Magi is not through the parched landscape of waste land (1922). It is equally arid and sterile landscape of the cold winter.

Lines 4 – 5: 'Journey of the Magi', 'The ways deep and the Weather Sharp, the very dead of winter', these lines define how the winter was. The Magi travelling to meet new born baby Jesus: only instructions lead them. So, they started their journey towards Bethlehem, where Jesus was about to born. It shows they are far away from Bethlehem. They might be around in Persia, east of nowadays Israel

Here we see the weather was pretty bad. Eliot's imagery implies to describe the weather. He mentioned that the weather was dead of winter. T.S. Eliot compared the winter's fury with the word 'Sharp' sharp – we can understand by this; the winter was going to pierce our body. We can feel the fury through this imagery. Certainly, they experienced hard time through this journey. The word "regret" used in this, they are mourning for their journey in that winter.

"Smelling of Vegetation" describes that they almost reached the people living place.

Thus, the uses of imagery in the poem enhanced Eliot's depiction of the Magi's experiences, through the description of the season and weather.

Four Quartets as an Imagery Poem

Four Quarters was written for 8 years from 1935 to 1942. These years were the period of World War II, shows matured and spiritual oriented. It is considered as relationship between present with the past where Eliot's *The Wasteland* and his early works reparations interest in time and culture.

Quartets referred the mortality of the individual and span of human existence. Each and every quarter focuses on particular place with significance of distinction to the history of human giving meaningful experience by the spiritual ideas.

Each quarter is further separated into 5 sections; he compared the sections with musical forms of the Sonata but it did not display the quality which was handled by TS Eliot in his early works or poetry. Instead he used the measurement and introduced awareness of the language. Likewise, he used some forms like "puns". This is how the word 'play' occurred in some kind of frequency.

Burnt Norton

In the first section *Burnt Norton*, Eliot exposes the ideas of spirituality. Eliot handled the main aspects in this section which is also in its most understate moments.

First one in first section mentioned a garden, certainly the garden of World War I. It was referred as the garden of Eden. It was known as the forbidden place for motors but it still exists in the literary work and also in memory. It shows the I World War and gives us in the image of the world which was covered with pleasant and fresh air. We can imagine with the phrase that there should be nobody but the green nature and are stress-less and trouble free actual life with the nature and the animals.

We are the only human being automatically compare ourselves with Adam and Eve how they were in the Eden Garden. These mere phrases made us to imagine the improbable place.



The first line of the second section in burnt Norton-garlic and ECE affairs in the month express the modern culture of aliens' attitude towards the nature. This juxtapose also was used in The Wasteland to expose the melancholic characteristics. This action seems traditional but this fragment does not oppose the human desires. It defines that human experience and the necessity is exclusive. In the V part in Burnt Norton, there is a line mentioned as "___, as a Chinese jar still" it shows that the Chinese Jar refers clearly the ways in which it was made in China. It clearly owes to Keats's "ode on a Grecian Urn", thus it did mould with imagery.

Keats defines the Grecian Urn to convey messages to viewers who sees the vase. Likewise, Elliot used the words Chinese Jar to express transformation capacity to define all about the Grecian Urn.

Eliot used the imagery simply "Chinese jar".

At the end of the section 'Burnt Norton', their children were laughing in the garden, making "The waste sad time". It shows that they are happy in the garden. Eliot's imagery tool filled 'Burnt Norton' enormously.

East Coker

In *Four Quartets*, the second part was written in 1940 and it was named as 'East Coker' which has been taken from the village, Somerset, England.

This 'East Coker' has 5 sections similarly to "Burnt Norton". The first section, in East Coker, describes the cycle of renewal and decay that Eliot saw it.

Every sign of human became empty, like, houses, gardens, etc. Unless they listen carefully, they can't hear the rural life. The language used by this section is just as the book 'Ecclesiastes' in the Bible.

Ecclesiastes defines about life, that is,

"Vanity of Vanities" says the Preacher;

"Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity." - Ecclesiastes 1:1

These lines are written by the son of David, King in Jerusalem. It shows the writer hates the life because of the truth-less people. The poet says that his life is like a cycle, not like a straight line, whatever happens to me, it's going to happen again. If a problem is overtaken by me may go away but similar critical situation would be ready to occupy its place.

Then Eliot rejects "the Knowledge from experiences", and he says it has limited values.

"East Coker provides the reminder of the war. It describes a hospital staffed by a "Wounded Surgeon" and a "Dying Nurse" so the patients are not healed instead they were dead because of their illness.

This section ends with a reference on Good Friday. It shows the he wasted his adult age and he did learn to articulate ideas, that are not useful in his life. It gives the meaning of the mourned days just like the Good Friday, that's a dark day & black.

Finally, he says, "In my end is my beginning."

Imagery, in this section, is Eliot, the poet, continues to work in "The Waste Land".

Cyclical images are mingled with language and is used by the poet and created.

Eliot has given religious oriented poem. He mentioned an 'house' which is the replacement of a factory; life is replaced by death.

One's life and the physical house transited by state and objects, they are all built or born and destroyed or replaced.

My beginning is my end in succession. Houses rise and fall, crumble are extended or removed, destroyed, restored or in their place or is an open field or a factory or a by-pass. These verses suggest Eliot's conviction of the beginning of death cycle he used opposite parts in his work.

Example: 'beginning / end' , 'rise / fall' , 'destroyed / restored'

The rebirth, it gives the connection with Christ's birth from death.

He says,



The whole earth is our hospital endowed by the ruined millionaire, wherein, if we do all, we shall die of the absolute paternal care that will not leave us, but prevents us everywhere.

IV (8-12). It showed the image of the earth is our hospital. It feels, there, the ruined millionaires filled the earth. The one who works well as mentioned here is Christ, so he died because of his father's wish. Hence, it is 'Good Friday'. On that day, people killed him and he died with the expectation of rebirth.

The hospital imagery shows the European War raging while this writing was done by Eliot. It represents his realization of human inability and fails to see behind the big history and the efforts of human and their failure.

Finally, he wrote,

"Though the dark, cold and the empty desolation" - V [13]

This imagery defines, even though we are living in dark life, 'cold' describes the pain of the illness 'empty desolation' – the soul and it has nothing to do with our life.

Even though we feel the emptiness, Eliot gives at the very end that there is a beginning by saying,

'In my end is my beginning'

The Dry Salvage

It was written in 1941. This topic 'The Dry Salvage' is a group of small rocky islands with a light house off the coast of Massachusetts. It shows that he might have visited the place at least once. This poem describes as a poem of water and hope. It begins with sea water images and these are Eliot's part of remembrance. The comparison between the river and the sea as models for the unknown in this imagery. Basically, the river signifies prominently in the human mythologies, its nature is crossed and conquered wherever it flows. But the sea represents as an endless preserver of depths and mysteries. Man can live or travel in the sea but he cannot conquer or he can't be a master for that river and the sea, that allows Eliot to engage in the flights of descriptive language that are free from the philosophical seriousness of the rest of the quartets.

In the second section, this equalizes the human a lot. In that,

"Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,
the silent withering of autumn flowers."

- The Dry Salvages - [II : 1 – 2]

In these lines, it shows the real painful cry and verses hid in silent. They can't show their feel, it seems they are not allowed to expose their feel. The imagery intruded and it gave the feel of the flower going to wither in the season of autumn. "Christopher Hill" points out that Christians observe the liturgical year, actually the autumn is the first season of the cycle, so it's the beginning.

"Years of living among the breakage"

- The Dry Salvages [II – 10]

This line describes that they are living. They can't even die on their wish, may they have some trustworthy because of them, they may survive among the unwanted, it showed "the breakage"

"There is no end of it"

This line refers that the sea will never be a blank state or easily circumscribed pond. But man should keep working on with good faith. Here, no mastery and no escape.

Third section:

This poem attributes to "Krishna's" advice about humanity not to "farewell" but to 'fare forward'. Eliot takes on Krishna in the Hindu religious book, Bhagavad Gita (2.47-8) and added that what the mind is intent on at the time of death is what shall fructify in the lives of others (adapts 8.6 of the Bhagavad Gita). So far, the idea is clear enough. But Eliot added the junction 'Fare Forward'. This is not in Gita but Eliot added this image of travel which accompany it.

Then, the fourth section, is a prayer to the Virgin Mary posing towards the sea. Voyagers. both the sailors and loved one stand for humanity, faced uncertain conditions and lack of knowledge, the final section is



about hope.

“apprehend/the point of intersection of the timeless/ with time”.

Man will always strive in vain forevery day’s existence which nevertheless contains moments of only half-noticed, grace-moments.

“you are the music/while the music lasts” while,”right action, while it never happens entirely successful It is nevertheless almost the way available for men to invert the “daemonic” forces that drive him.

Little Giddings (1992)

“Little Giddings” is the last of the quarters

“ash on an old man's sleeve

is all the ash the burnt roses leaves” -[II-2]

“Roses and Fires” are important in this poem.

Roses made us to remember,traditional symbol of English royalty, that represents all over the England. But its stand for divine-love, mercy and the garden where the children in “Burnt Norton”fire defines both flame of divine harshness, anger and spiritual ether capable of purifying the soul of human, and to understand. These double images create a sense of paradox. But these two can't be together and out of time, both get purified, and destroyed.

This paradox leads to create the alternative world rendered through spiritual retreat and figure of supernatural.

The dead with their words,

“tongued with fire”,

Offered an alternative set of possibilities.

Once again, these forms provide that Eliot was an ideal form of poetry.

“The familiar compound ghost” in “Where prayer has been valid”

Eliot proposes imagination and few of the faith that can conquer the strictures and places upon man with time and history.

“The eyes of a familiar compound ghost”

As a ghost, in this, Section III reminds the poet, escape is always possible. This is the significance we notice. Ghost's words are generated by the poet. Actually, he engaged in dialogues.

“What they had to leave us – a symbol;

A symbol perfected in depth”

These lines give us strong feeling of death. The death only can offer us a 'symbol'.

Symbol never give us opportunity for interpretation and imagination exercise. By allowing us a way to bypass the reality to our world.

This poem finally, Celebrates the ability of human vision to transcends the apparent limitations of human morality.

“And the fire and the rose are one”

It ends with this paradox but the poet compares these two and delivers by joining them and declares that these are same in the human life.

Conclusion

The theoretical demarcation of the terms “image” and “imagery” from our diachronic overview of literary history and it is the application of the ideas of literary criticism. A study of imagery cannot leave aside from the tropes (i.e. figures of speech)

I took two of the poetics of T.S.Eliot to expose imagery. He handled imagery at his best in both of his famous poetic pieces, “Journey of the Magi” and “Four Quartets”.

Past and present experiences and imagery made a new pattern in “Four Quartets”.



The sensuous imagery in *Four Quartets* is imaginations and designs which give an amazing meaning with the help of a single imagery "Grecian Urn" which is used here for "Chinese Jar".

Thus, Eliot used imagery words and phrases to give meanings to convey what he wanted.

Here, in these poetries, we get the extraordinary sense through his writings. That is how, we say, T.S.Eliot used the imagery as a language.

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