

Candidate 5

T.S. Eliot is a modernist poet who deals with several aspects of change in response to the environment and society around him. Social factors, the change in the psyche of Europe, the ~~on~~ religious and sexual attitudes all adapted in response to traumatic events in the 20th Century. In particular, the Waste Land, A Love Song for J. Alfred Prufrock and The Hollow Men give Eliot's own attitudes to the consequences of the main stimulus of change during his era - the Great War. The poems' subtle use of allusions - in particular to Dante - help to create a rather bleak image of this new world and paints a vivid picture of society at the time. → clear focus on the question.

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Eliot's works are full of subtle ideas that ~~the~~ successfully present a change in the population's morality and sexual relations. Pre modernist work was often strict and rigid which was representative of the general times; sex or lust and desire were not discussed but in Eliot's 'A Love Song for J. Alfred Prufrock', sexual impotency is an obvious idea in the poem which makes his character differ from characters in previous works and the rigid times they lived in.

Eliot's use of repetition 'Do I dare?' and 'Do I dare?' 1 time to turn back and descend the stair (with a bald spot in the middle of my head) gives the reader a sense Prufrock is sexually dissatisfied, self aware he is in a state of frustration as he is unable to form intimate relationships.

The image of the stairs is explicit in his desire and Eliot is suggesting ~~as~~ his era no longer stuck to a conventional long term committed relationship by focusing on the characters' frustration and longing for desire. ~~Still~~ The attitudes of seeking lust over love, ~~and~~ desire and the move towards a longer term more casual relationship is also displayed in 'The Waste Land'. The fire sermon in particular tracks the consequences of the changing psyche towards sexuality in Eliot's time. An interaction between a typist and her 'lover' demonstrates the loss of fertility and sex as an act of prostitution using sinister images. The man is described as a 'human machine' - the comparison between man ~~who~~ (who should be full of thought and feeling) is instead created and made out to

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he mechanical, forced and human warmth and feeling is lost suggesting intimacy for love is fading in this new culture. Instead we see a keen racial meet ups ~~not suggesting~~ interestingly, a representation of changing morals in Europe through the use of cold or broken imagery is also present in The Hollow Men. These Men, suffering in limbo for their actions suffer the consequence of lack of intimacy that cannot be fulfilled. The group are described as 'trembling with tenderness' lips that would kiss. Much like Profrack, although there is an obvious desire for ~~sympathetic~~ intimacy, this will always be unfulfillable. It could be that all three poems hold aspects of this idea as Eliot has evaluated the changed world around him and feels his people are too broken, too cold or too traumatised to be able to form long term long relationships regardless of if they are a gang man in the wasteland ~~or just~~ or living in limbo circumstance - all aspects and walks of life have long abandoned such Victorian values. There is a clear message loose morals are being adapted in Eliot's time.

The utter devastation of the Great War for Eliot forced to world very quickly to change in order to cope with the fallout of destruction. Although Eliot investigates the personal adaptation made by individuals in

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his time (as discussed in the previous section) - his poems also successfully highlighted a shift or 'fall of European Society' as a mass consequence of the war, economic depression etc. Although it is obvious the Hollow ~~man~~ Men is set in a limbo state, there are suggestions the setting is representative of Europe itself. Their land is being described as the 'dog land' and the 'cactus land'. These images help to convey Eliot thought his surroundings had been drained of resources, life was hard to sustain and that the land lacks fertility for the important rebirth. This of course contrasts some aspects of the Victorian Era that saw rise of the industrial revolution, a wave of new inventions and businesses that helped develop the wealthy. Rebirth and regeneration seems impossible in the land described and Europe's fall in comparison to previous eras is obvious in the waste land. Allusions to the Golden Bough and the character the Fisher King help create a desire for rebirth. Intriguingly Eliot ~~also~~ juxtaposes old mythology in a modern London setting. The London he knew ~~was not to be~~ is no longer bustling with people and exchanges that result in procreation but is instead barren and dead - as signalled by the 'nymphs are departed'. These were part of a ritual to celebrate marriage along the Thames but instead they are gone and the river 'bears no empty bottles' showing

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a lack of celebration or life. The Fisher King, who infers himself works fishing in the 'dull Canal' (again Sharn corrupted in water - a key factor in fertility). It is suggested he is waiting for the holy grail to restore fertility. For Eliot this would suggest he is waiting for another resurrection of Christ and only then, this land that has gone so horribly wrong can be restored.

Eliot's poems The Waste Land, Prufrock and the Hollow Men allude to Dante's Inferno to suggest the times they are living in have now become a personal hell or hell on earth due to the circumstances of the time. The war incorporated all of the violence associated with hell but Europe is still left in a ~~hollow~~ state afterward. This. The whole of the Hollow Men is structured on the idea the men in Limbo are there as a result of their inactions and spiritual emptiness - this is suggested by Eliot to contrast the soldiers who fought and died in the war but these men have done nothing to deserve heaven or hell and are stuck. This creates a numb state as supported by the use of dry imagery and the image the Hollow men can only 'whisper' not talk. This numbness is due if the people in Europe are unsure of what to do with themselves now, they cannot take part or help their fallen surroundings in any way. ~~Limbo is also~~ and Dante Limbo also runs through the wasteland with those in his poem described as breathing

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* 'Sighs, short and infrequent'. This alludes to Dante's Hell canto 'Here, so far, I could tell there was no lamentation except sighs which caused the external air to tremble'. This suggests that Europe is full of people who are not living a bad life as such but are not progressing and creating such as the population in the time before them. Instead all they do is sigh and stay in a state of limbo waiting for judgement.

In conclusion, T.S. Eliot ~~has~~ has created 3 successful poems that deal with the idea of change - both in sexual morality and the conditions / environment he was living in. Allusions to Dante suggest a sense of moral loss, spiritual emptiness and lack of production contrasting the Victorian Era. Preface too touches on this subject but that poem highlights that there has been a shift in sexual desire that is being discussed more openly in a modernist era. There is no doubt that although personal, these poems all allude and link to the horrors of the great war that has triggered such a fast paced and dramatic change in attitudes during his time. Eliot captures these subtly through his allusions and imagery and although bleak, do hint forwards on almost religious wait for a rebirth whether this is through another resurrection or sacrifice in the hope for positive change.