

Introduction to World Literature
Professor Dr. Merin Simi Raj
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
The Wasteland-II

Hello and welcome back to yet another session of the NPTEL course, 'Introduction to world literature'. We are in the middle of our discussion of the poem, The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot.

(Refer Slide Time 0:24)

The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot Poetry Foundation
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47103/the-waste-land>

To whom Saint Mary Winklooth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine,
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: "Stemon!"
"You who were with me in the ships at Mytilene
"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
"Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
"Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
"Oh with his whistled dog dig it up again,
"You hypocrite, learned!—mean vegetable,—mean fiend!"

II. A Game of Chess

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Capricorn peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glasses of her joints rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—streaked confound
And downward the sense in colours, stirred by the air
That fished from the window, there ascended
In burning the prolonged candle-flames,
Hung their smokes into the liquefied air,
Storing the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wound laid with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sat light a carved dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still the cical, and still the world pursued,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time

1 of 13 20/03/20, 05:58 AM

We are looking at the 2nd part, a game of chess and we have been seeing how this is seen as a representative poem of the modernist period and also how this entirely captured the episoding nature of life in early 20th century.

(Refer Slide Time 0:37)

The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot Poetry Foundation <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47333/the-waste-land>

Waste told upon the walls, staring forms
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
Footways shuffled on the stairs
Under the twilight, under the trash, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be wargily still.

"My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
"I never know what you are thinking. Think."

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.


"What is that noise?"
The wind under the door.
"What is that noise none? What is the wind doing?"
Nothing again nothing.
"Do
"You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
"Nothing?"

I remember
Those are people that were his eyes.
"Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"

But
O O O that Shakespearean Rag—
It's so elegant
So intelligent
"What shall I do now? What shall I do?"
"I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
"With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
"What shall we ever do?"
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing blind eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lili's husband got demobbed, I said—
I didn't notice my work, I said to her myself.

4 of 13 25/12/18, 11:38 AM



When we ended the previous lecture, it was with this neurotic paranoid woman who was sounding anxious and who was sounding paranoid about the noises that she hearing around her and we have a speaker who is trying to console her but at the same time, we realise that it is an impossible task. The woman continues to be neurotic and paranoid and we also realise that there is no linear narrative structure, there is no storyline which is built into this poem.

It is only a sequence of , series of events, a series of images which are scattered, which are more like at a metaphorical level, begging to be seen as images of the early 20th century of the modern world. Before we continue with the poem, I also want you to think about the title, a game of chess. As mentioned earlier, this is also from the title of a play by Thomas Middleton titled, a game of chess and there is also a reference to another of Middleton's plays, women beware women where there is a scene which also talks about, a game of chess where there is a game of chess and a series of events around it.

So when Elliott is using this title, a game of chess and when he is referring to a game of chess, there are many things which are subtly indicated over here. If you think about this game, chess is unlike many other games. There is a calculated nature into this game. The moves, the steps are all measured and every single step, every single move that is being made is designed in such a way that it should expedite, it should accelerate the defeat of the enemy.

So this is how the movements, the various steps in this game are designed. There is of course a certain kind of spontaneity but that spontaneity is a very measured one. It is something which is very very calculative. So when Elliott is using this game as a central referral point in this discussion which is about lavish rooms, about the cheapness of the modern society, about walls, about neurosis, about paranoia and when he is placing the game of chess as a central motive in some way or the other in a very very subtle way, he is also referring to the ways in which relationships and every single move in the modern society is governed by these calculated moves.

There is a purpose, there is a very definite end and an aim which is competitive, which is meant to annihilate the enemy, which is always in opposition to the other. And unlike many other games, this is a game which one place together. Much of the moves happen inside the head, there are things that we anticipate. The next move and the move after that is anticipated when one makes one pawn move ahead or go back and this is also a game which cannot be predicted because it is happening inside the heads of the opponents. It could go anywhere.

And also there are rehearsed moves as if you are familiar with the game, you would know that there are different kinds of moves, there are certain patterns, there are certain kinds of moves which would also force the opponent to move in a certain way. It is a very very calculated game. And it takes intelligence, it takes perseverance. It is not something which comes to you as a natural gift. It is a technique, it is something that you develop over a period of time.

It is something towards which in order to excel in that, you need to invest your time, you need to invest your energy. It requires not just emotional investment, it also requires a certain kind of an intellectual investment. So this is what Eliot also perhaps has in mind when he is bringing to the forefront, the game of chess. And in terms of action, apparently there is no action in a game of chess but we know that the action is happening at various levels within this chess board.

And the way victory and failure gets decided, it is very very different. There are no grey areas, there are no ambiguities about it irrespective of the number of moves that you make. Irrespective of the kind of progress that you are making in the beginning or towards the end of the game, once you manage to slay the King, it is also evident that you are victorious. Fine, there is a certain finality to it at the end of the game.

So there is also another thing. In the, in Thomas Middleton's play, Beware women, there is also a reference to sexuality in the context of the game of chess. So here, Elliott is also trying to perhaps indicate to us, hint it out to us like it is there in almost throughout this poem that there is no spontaneity even when it comes to sexuality, there is no spontaneity even when it comes to human relationships even if it is a sexual relationship. It is all based on calculated moves designed to take you towards the final step, the destination which means victory or failure.

Coming back to the discussion of this poem, I begin looking at this segment where the speaker is also trying to remember. I remember those are pearls that were his eyes. Are you alive or not? Is there nothing in your head? Yes, so again Elliott is taking back to a classical reference. This is from Tempest, Shakespeare's play. This is a line from the Tempest about a drowned person's eyes turning into pearls. It also invokes a zombielike image which is very very typically modernist.

And remember the reference to war and how he spoke about dead men losing their bones and rats' alleys but here when he makes this reference to Tempest and Shakespeare again, what follows soon after is also a sense of disappointment that modern audience may not really get it because they do not have the patience or perhaps the intellect for it. Or perhaps they really do not care. And that is what the poem begins to indicate from now on.

I read to you that from the poem. Are you alive or not? Is there nothing in your head? But O O O O that Shakespearean rag-It is so elegant so intelligent. What shall I do now? What shall I do? I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street with my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow? What shall we ever do?

When he is talking about the pearls and the sinking eyes, he is talking about the hollowness of the modern society and he also realises that how terrible the modern people, how the modern society is. And soon after this reference to Tempest, he is moving to Shakespearean rag. So what is this Shakespearean rag? Perhaps, this is an illusion to a song called the dark mysterious rag. It was a popular one (())(7:32) on this popular song by Erwing Berlen and this was a song from Elliott's time.

So he is only referring to that it is a Shakespearean rag to talk about how popular certain other things are which has got nothing to do with the classical, which has got nothing to do with the intensity that Elliott is referring to in terms of scholarship, in terms of classical knowledge and in terms of the traditional value system that he thinks is also waning away gradually but very very steadily. And look at the butt in this poem which is also placed slightly away from the rest of it, from the rest of the poem.

And the but also in certain way signifies that there is a break that we are going to move onto another segment onto, that we are going to move onto another set of things which the poem is going to take us through. So when he is talking about the Shakespearean rag, this popular song, that it is elegant, so intelligent. Of course he is being very very sarcastic and he is also looking at the modern world where there is perhaps hardly any difference between Tempest, a line from Tempest or a line from one of the popular songs.

And now, a series of questions. What shall I do? What shall I do? What shall we do tomorrow? What shall we ever do? He is referring to a series of people who got lot of time in their hand but they are clueless about what to do. And think about the early 20th century and as we recalled in the previous session, this is the time after the Industrial Revolution. This is the time when technology is really taking on the world and it is sweeping across Europe.

And this is the time when technology is aiding the process of colonisation. We find that especially in the context of Britain, there are a lot of other colonies which are also joining hands with Britain and moving ahead in a certain way at a very great pace in terms of technology, in terms of making life easier. So there is certainly a reference to lighting made easy and people having a lot of time at hand and not least to recall the World War that had just happened and how technology also aided it in multiple ways.

So here Elliott is referring to a set of people who really do not know what to do with their time and these series of questions, it reflects their helplessness, their sense of lack and this total absence of any kind of purpose or any kind of direction which could take them ahead. There is also an inability, a very inherent ability to do, to know what is meaningful and what I not. What is worth pursuing and what is not?

In a certain way, the poem in the first few segments, it gives us a sense of the many other worthwhile things the speaker had been pursuing or what he things are worth pursuing. For example, the classics or mythology, the value system which has been passed on. And now currently when the poet is talking about the contemporary modern world, he also realises that there is an inability to communicate this across.

That no one knows what to do and it is a nothingness which begins to dominate. There is a futility of everything which begins to fill the air. One could by extension even talk about the loss of religion or spirituality in modern life and in Elliott's own case if you know about one of his later poems, *The Return of the Magian* and if you also know about one of his later poems where he talks about his return to religion, his return to spirituality, the poem where he talks about the three Magi, we also get to know that there is a way in which Elliott is perhaps referring the loss of anything concrete in modern life and this is something which had begun to set in.

From the Victorian times onwards if you will recall Matt Ronald's poem, *The Dover Beach* which we have already taken a look at it, is a very clear signifier, a very clear indicator of how everything begins to ebb away that a Sea of Faith cannot hold any more. So in the early 20th century, during the modernist times, we find most of the writers lamenting this loss and as Elliott has beautifully captured, the centre cannot hold any more.

There is nothing that could remain at the centre. And this poem, *Wasteland* in its entirety and this section in particular is actually drawing our attention to how this leads people entirely helpless as to they are still trying to figure out what to be done with their lives. Nothing seems to be worth pursuing and nothing seems to be worth holding onto. Now become to a very direct reference to a game of chess.

The hot water at ten. And if it rains, a closed car at four. And we shall play a game of chess, pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

These are really really random things and very very mundane, ordinary things. They mean and they do not. And they talk about you know how people wish to just kill their time because there is nothing else to do. They perhaps would stay up all night and play a game of chess or they may just go out or just have a hot water bath at ten. And this is perhaps also again a reminder that

without anything to hold onto, without these value systems which are soon ebbing away in the early 20th century, life is just another game of chess that we play with ourselves, among ourselves and sometimes competing certain goals and most importantly, strategising every moves.

That is what he means by inserting the game of chess here as well. Even the midst of this futility, even in the midst of getting caught in a sense of purposelessness, these people who are involved in this situation, they still want to play chess, strategise, set goals, win and make calculated moves without being, without even attempting to be spontaneous. And sometimes it could also be just playing for the sake of playing a game because there is hardly anything else to do.

So I would like to again remind you that in Thomas Middleton's play, *Women beware women*, there is a scene which has a game of chess and it represents all the more that a man makes while cornering and seducing a woman. And this in fact comes up later again in *The wasteland* when Elliott tells us about the story of the young man, Carbon Clive. You can find it if you care to read through the rest of the sections of *The wasteland*.

And when he was referring to lidless eyes, he is of course referring to sleepless nights and almost to the to the extent of an impossibility to fall asleep. Sleeping being also one of those conditions which would help us renovate ourselves, which would help us rejuvenate ourselves and give us a moment of rest, something away from the everydayness and from the mundaneness that one goes through.

And about the waiting for a knock upon the door. It goes without saying that it talks about these set of people or these individuals who are waiting for something to happen, someone to come in, a knock at the door and some meaning to walk in through the door and fulfil their lives. Again this wait for something that may or may not come, again please recall the references from waiting for go though where nothing comes, no one goes and nothing happens.

And after this point, we find the poem entirely collapsing into disorder. There are just conversations set apart. So the setting entirely changes. Think about the burnished throne in the beginning which made us recall, which made us think about Antony and Cleopatra, very classic, very romantic, eternal love. And from that, it has descended into a scene in the pub. Let us follow the conversation to see what Elliott is hinting at, where what he is taking us through.

And it is in this final segment that there are elements of fertility, about sexuality, about loveless marriage, these are also some of the themes that he had been engaging within, this is particularly evident in Wasteland. Wasteland as you may already know it refers to this infertile land out of which nothing would come and it also refers to this absolute lack of virility in the figurative sense as well as in a sexual sense.

And in this final segment when he is talking about marriage, sexuality and the many things and the many related emotions which are part of it, he is also drawing our attention to the central theme of this poem which is about navigating our way through a world where all of these things have been reduced to merely a game of chess, merely calculated moves, merely certain set of things, strategies and techniques that one use just to survive through the modern world.

So coming to this final segment, When Lil's husband got demobbed. So we are now being introduced to 2 characters. We have Lil and her husband and there is a speaker who seems to know everything about the characters who are part of this poem. And Lil is a character which instantly appears again in wasteland.

(Refer Slide Time 16:43)

The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot Poetry Foundation <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47333/the-waste-land>

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
You gave them all out, Lil, and got a nice set.
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time.
And if you don't give it him, then others will, I said.
Oh is there, she said. Something of that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.
Others can pick and choose if you can't.
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
(She has only thirty-one.)
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face.
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You are a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said.
What you get married for if you don't want children?
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Goodnight Bill, Goodnight Lou, Goodnight May, Goodnight.
To us, Goodnight, Goodnight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

III. The Fire Sermon

The river's bank is broken; the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Comes the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends

1 of 13

25/12/18, 15:58:04



When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said-I did not mince my words, I said to her myself. Hurry up, please its time. Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart, he will want to know what you done with that money he gave you to get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there. You gave them all out, Lil, and got a nice set. He said, I swear I cannot bear to look at you.

And no more cannot I, I said and think of poor Albert. He has been in the Army for four years, he wants a good time, and if you do not give it him, there is others will, I said. Oh is there, she said. Something of that, I said. Then I will know who to thank, she said and give me a straight look. Hurry up please its time. If you do not like it you can get on with it, I said. Others can pick and choose if you cannot.

So there he has many characters here. There is Lil, Lil's husband, Albert who is clearly away fighting at the Army and he is soon about to come back and there is also this friend who is trying to advise Lil. So there is no ordered rhyme as you can see. It is just bits of conversation, even a little bit of order that the poem seemed to have in the beginning has completely collapsed over here. So classic culture, the classic tradition to which we were introduced to at the beginning, very elegant and very knowledgeable and very scholarly, and of course very romantic and that has kind of given way into ballroom conversations.

There is nothing elegant about this. It is very very direct, it is not subtle at all. It also talks about things which were otherwise very very taboo. So what is this conversation about? Here, from these, from this segment onwards, these lines that we just read out and the rest of game of chess, it is about a woman who is having this conversation with her friend or one of her acquaintances.

So one woman is explaining how she told her friend to make herself look good, look attractive for her husband who is returning from the war because he will come back desiring to own her and she should make herself look good for that because if she does not, he may go end up looking at other places. So the woman tells her friend to get her grocery pulled out and buy herself a new set of teeth, it is all about the looks.

And more importantly, the significant turning point here is that the woman who pretends to be, the woman who appears like Lil's friend and who is advising her on how to keep her husband is also telling her, if you do not know how to keep her, perhaps I will just chip in and make him my own. So this is the way even friendship begins to work here and this is something that Elliott is doing deliberately to get this thing across. There is hardly anything which is permanent and it is more or less like a very wise, smart moves made in chess.

Look at these lines in between in all caps, HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME., HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME. It is the bar tender because it is already very late. They want them to leave the bar, leave the pub so that they can close and go, it is almost closing time, it is almost midnight perhaps or even past midnight. And this is in fact a standard thing for the bartenders to see in the UK when the bar is closing for the night and Elliott is using this phrase as a refrain.

Your does, it keeps coming. There are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 times where this refrain in all caps is getting refrained. It foregoes you know, it means for one that the bartender is asking them to hurry because it is closing time and at another level, it is also about the modern period, it is also about the speaker being reminded or perhaps the speaker himself reminding the readers that there is no time left. You need to hurry up, it is time and whatever little that needs to be done or not done, that that needs to be either wrapped up or just left alone wherever it is.

And this also this refrain which sounds very very ordinary and also a bit creepy at another level, it is in fact, it adds a sense of urgency and a desperation. And interestingly, the women who are part of this confession, the one who is listening, Lil specially, she does not seem to get that at all. The sense of urgency and the desperation which the poem is trying to convey perhaps is also with the assumption that the modern readers may not get it at all, they may just continue to find their way through life, navigate their way through life, not even knowing the kind of changes that had come in, swept in.

And in that perspective when we think about the series of events that happened after the publication of this poem, the Times in between the war and what happened after the Second World War, we are led to be more and more convinced about the arguments which this poem is making that people really did not care and they had, they were clueless about the kind of catastrophe that waited ahead of them, think of the Hiroshima Nagasaki bombing which entirely changes the grammar of wars and entirely changed the way in which people can get at each other regardless of how humongous the repercussions could be.

So now this conversation, it begins to take an ugly turn. If you do not like it, you can get on with it, I said. Others can pick and choose if you cannot. But if Albert makes off, it will not be for lack of telling. You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique (and her only thirty-one). I cannot help it, she is pulling a long face, its then, pills I took, to bring it off, she said.(She has had 5

already, and nearly died of young George. The chemist said it would be all right, but I have never been the same. You are a proper fool, I said. Well, if Albert will not leave you alone, there it is, I said, What you get married for if you do not want children? HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME. Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon, And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot. HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME. HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME.

It is a very awkward conversation between 2 friends, apparently 2 friends. Lil when accuses her friend of saying if at all her husband goes away with someone else, I will know perhaps who to thank. The friend who claims to be Lil's woman, she is telling her very very directly that she should be ashamed to look so antique when she has really turned thirty one. And then Lil says the reason for her to look so exhausted and so antique and so old because she has been taking those pills to bring it off.

The phrase, bring it off in this case literally to abort a baby and we also need to think about those times which is the early 20th-century, 1920s and 1930s when taking a pill, it could have serious repercussions. It could have serious strong chemical reactions. It could lead to serious chemical reactions in your body because things were not really advanced then. So when she is talking about a pill, obviously she is also hinting to the many relations that she had been having when her husband was away and the pills that she had to take in order to abort a baby which was perhaps the outcome of one of those relations.

And she also talks about her many pregnancies and the 5 babies and how she nearly died when she had little George. And she talks about how she continued to take the drug because the pharmacist said it was okay. So we find these many many things coming together here. The many advancements in the medical field and the many advancements in the field of medicine, the many advancements in the field of technology in general, how that also takes away your life in a very intimate, personal way as well.

Of course I do not think Elliott is trying to be judgemental about the things about the way things are going in the early 20th century but of course he is drawing our attention to the less visible images which can also be very heart-wrenching and very heartbreaking as well. And here the conversation also begins to break down. The woman who is with Lil is clearly not interested in the conversation, she continues to accuse Lil of many things, even goes to the extent of saying,

what you get married for if you do not want children? Suggesting that this is all a part of what you sign up for, that this is a packaged deal that you signed up for, willingly and there is no way out of it.

What Elliott is here trying to do is to give a sense of how difficult things have become, how complicated the English society had become irrespective of the very advanced, very posh outer layer that one gets to see. In the early 20th century, there are many many things which are happening in England which also makes it one of the superpowers of the world. They are way ahead of the rest of Europe in terms of their colonial power, they had established themselves as the land where the sun never sets.

And we also know about the many many reforms that they tried to bring about in their colonies if we take our own country as an example. We know about the multiple ways in which moderately entered the Indian subcontinent through the many interventions and through the many policy decisions that the colonial administration, the British Crown had taken on behalf of the colony. So we know about the many many good things and the contributions to the postcolonial world that Britain had done.

But irrespective of that, it is also saying that but in spite of the (())(25:51) also telling us that in spite of this white man's burden in times in spite of this holier than thou attitude that the colonial master had always been donning, things are not really fine underneath this posh, elegant, all well surface. Finally before we wrap up, I want you to pay attention to the fact that the theme of infertility is very very prominent and evident here throughout because there is hardly anything productive that is happening.

There are a series of things which happens. It is part of the action in some way or the other but nothing really leads to anything at all and no one seems to be sure of anything. And here we do not get even a sense of the progress of the idea of modernity or any sense of the technological or advancements in other fields that are getting reflected into day-to-day lives. The ways in which relationships are defined, it had touched the rock bottom as far as Elliott is concerned.

And it is a fall from the civilisation and from the culture that was before. And in the conversation between these 2 women, Lil and the woman she meets at the bar, if there is one thing that stands

out is incredibly painful is also about these, the image of the lower class women almost killing themselves to abort their babies. And this is an act of self-preservation at some level, to preserve dignity, to preserve their relations and also to preserve their reputation in some way.

But in this process, they are literally killing themselves, their body is getting disintegrated and there is no way in which an intervention could be made at this point irrespective of the hard-hitting facts of modernity as well that we see around. And towards the end, we find that this difference gets stronger, HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME, HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME. And then good night Bill, good night Lou, good night May, good night. Ta ta. Good night, good night good night ladies, good night sweet ladies, good night good night.

So that is about it. The poem comes to a halting end at this point without really resolving anything, without really bothering us to leave us with some feelgood factor about anything at all and we also realise that there has not been any movement at all from the beginning till the end. There are just a series of images which could represent either the contemporary in the way it is or it could not draw our attention to what the contemporary is not. Beyond that, it really does not do anything but irrespective of it, think about the powerful images and the powerful kind of intervention that this poem had then and now.

Towards the end, we also find that you know they are talking about going to somebody's place for dinner and they are trying to normalise things but we also know that they are pretty much meaningless and they do not change anything which is happening here. Here, the bar keeper towards the end, we realise he is practically yelling. He wants everyone to leave, it is time to close down. And the scene ends with everyone saying goodbye to one another and they are very pleasant and polite and we also get to know that when Lil and her friend are having this conversation, there were so many others who were around them.

Bill, Lou and May and they are all being very courteous when they are trying to say goodbye. And considering the kind of conversation that they just had about telling Lil that she looks antique, she may even lose her husband if she continues to look like this and do not take care of herself and why did she even agree to get married if she did not want to have children? And given the way these unpleasant things were part of this conversation, it looks quite inappropriate

and very ironic that they are very nice to each other. Good night sweet ladies, Lil says, it says but perhaps it is also about the way the modern life is.

Everything is part of this friendship and there is nowhere in which one can continue to be only appropriate and only polite because the modern times and the situations that one is caught within, it also calls for these ambivalences to come together. The final repetition of good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night, this is again a reference to Ophelia. She is a woman who draws herself in Shakespeare's play, Hamlet.

You find how significant the references to Shakespeare are throughout this segment. And Elliott had definitely had done this very very deliberately hoping that his audience would catch it but truth be told, it also needs some kind of a scholarly glossary intervention, a scholarly guy taking us through all of these references most of the time. They are not as self-evident as Elliott perhaps had hoped it would be. But that is perhaps the predicament that he is also drawing our attention to that things are not really self-evident.

They need to be shown in certain ways, they need to be showcased and framed in certain ways that they begin to make sense and it also opens up possibilities to talk about these things. I hope you enjoyed reading this poem and I leave you with this thought, what Elliott and most of the modernists had achieved the most was this possibility that they opened up that it became possible to talk about the modern times, to talk about the early 20th century in ways that were not part of the dominant colonial rhetoric, in ways that were not part of the dominant narratives of modernity, of progress, of technology, of advancement, of newer governments, of newer policies.

It was a rosy picture in many ways. Here Elliott along with many other Modernist writers, he is giving us a forum to talk not just about the early 20th century but also talk about the predicament that we are all caught in in spite of the many things, the many narratives, the many rosy narratives which are dominating the society, the contemporary or at any point of time. I hope this was helpful in giving you a sense of what this poem is and you also should know that this poem is open to multiple interpretations and the poem, Wasteland, all 4 segments together, it is definitely worth taking a look at and also pay attention to the many scholarly frameworks and narratives within which the poem continues to be situated and the canonical status of course that

it continues to enjoy. I thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.