NEO-CLASSICISM IN ALEXANDER POPE AND T.S. ELIOT

by

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B.A. The University of British Columbia, 1970

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

in the Department

of

English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standards

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

May, 1975
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Date May 23, 1975
ABSTRACT

Following the confusion of the seventeenth century, eighteenth-century thinkers felt the need for the stability and common sense which they found in neo-classicism. Their neo-classical literature was ordered by rules of logic and restraint. Early twentieth-century neo-classicists also came to believe in the critical importance of tradition. They shared with their eighteenth-century predecessors a reaction against the faddish, hazy, irregular, erratic, and sentimental elements in art and society. Neo-classical art is didactic and aims to reform abuses in taste and conduct by upholding traditional moral and rational standards. It seeks restraint and precision of language exhibited in disciplined form. Neo-classicists refer respectfully to the heroic and classical past, using the eloquence of past history and literature as an allusive mirror which heightens our perception of the present.

This study explores the similarities in the neo-classical perspective of Alexander Pope and T.S. Eliot. The primary effect of the study is to emphasize their similar thematic focus, concentrating on sterility in western society due to the rejection of traditional values. Through examination of the themes, structure, and imagery of the poetry, primarily The Rape of the Lock and The Waste Land, together with a review of relevant prose, the neo-classicism of Pope and Eliot is perceived as fundamental to a proper understanding of their work.
Eliot's neo-classicism evolved under the influence of T.E. Hulme and Ezra Pound in the twentieth century, John Dryden in the seventeenth century, and Alexander Pope in the eighteenth century. Through his 1927 statement that he was "'Anglo-Catholic in religion...classicist in literature, and royalist in politics'"¹ Eliot established his traditional position on religion, literature and life.

Similarities between Eliot's poetry and that of the eighteenth century can be traced through his respect for the neo-classicists. In "What is a Classic?" he observed that the classic feature of maturity - in mind, manner, and language - is clearly evident in eighteenth-century English literature through the poetry of Pope. There broods in the literature of both Eliot and Pope, as neo-classical authors, a discontent which stems from their outrage at the loss of traditions which has caused social, political, religious, and artistic confusion. This discrepancy between the ideal and the actual in western civilization prompted the ascendance of verse satire. Pope and Eliot enforce, through ridicule, traditional standards of thought and conduct, and especially, the need for restraint and order. Both Pope and Eliot extended their poetics beyond past traditional forms by relating to the language and poetics of their time. Yet, Eliot's poetics represent a far more radical departure from the practice of his time than do the poetics

of Pope. In this respect, in their examination of Eliot's poetry, critics have often stressed the importance of his moral tone. However, very little comment has been made on his satire, and it is in the practice of the satirist's art that Eliot and Pope seem particularly to concur.
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CHAPTER I

Neo-classicism

By the terms of the classic-romantic controversy to call any work of art 'classical', implies either the highest praise or the most contemptuous abuse, according to the party to which one belongs. It implies certain particular merits or faults: either the perfection of form or the absolute zero of frigidity.¹

The neo-classical eras of Alexander Pope and T.S. Eliot are balanced on the fulcrum of Romanticism. Eighteenth-century Augustan literature was a revolt against the extravagant enthusiasm of the Renaissance; early twentieth-century neo-classical literature was a reaction against nineteenth-century romantic fervour. Twentieth-century man's disgust at the altering framework of western society's values is reflected in anti-romantic attitudes in literature:

...the decline of religious faith and of moral values, the widespread acceptance of the naturalistic view of life, the mechanization of both external existence and of individual personality, the disintegrating force of an industrialized society - these are some of the factors which, in the twentieth century, brought about a crucial break in romantic tradition.²

This turn from romanticism to neo-classicism is reflected in T.E. Hulme's explicit statement that "after a hundred years of romanticism we are in for a classical revival."³

The seventeenth century was one of political, religious, and artistic upheaval,\(^4\) and following this confusion, eighteenth-century thinkers felt the need for stability and common sense and thus sought the comforting perspective of neo-classicism. The neo-classical movement in English literature peaked during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Neo-classicism involved "a complex interweaving of pure rationalism, the Rules of art derived from Greece and Rome, and various forms of emotional revolt".\(^5\) The philosophical and scientific interests of Hobbes, Newton, and other leaders of the period were based on critical and rational observations of nature, man, and society, which in turn were reflected in the rationalism which pervades early eighteenth-century literature. Neo-classicism was expressed in society and art through ideals of logic, restrained emotion, and social propriety, all ordered by stringent rules: "In poetry and prose, the artists of the eighteenth century were tired of the fantastical, the irregular, and the hazy. They demanded correctness and an adherence to literary rules which were clear and reasonable."\(^6\)

\(^4\) a) The 1605 Guy Fawkes Rebellion; 1648 execution of Charles I; Cromwell's ascension to power; the overthrow of Cromwell and the coming to power of Charles II.
   b) Puritan rebellion against the lax forms of Protestantism, and rebellion against stringent Catholicism.
   c) The Puritan suppression of theatres and frivolous art forms.


In the twentieth century it was the Imagist movement which rebelled against the "fantastical, the irregular and the hazy" elements found particularly in some Romantic and Victorian literature. The Imagists "hurled a direct challenge at exuberance, sentiment, and cloudily romantic lushness in poetry." In contrast to the Romantic elements, the Imagists suggested as their "principal objective...a verse of hard and dry clarity, a goal chiefly inspired by the example of French symbolism." The French influence, particularly through Baudelaire, generated in Eliot and others a respect for some aspects of the neo-classical position. Eliot noted that Baudelaire "belongs to a definite place in time...and by his nature is the first counter-romantic in poetry."

Dating from an earlier French literary tradition which had certain things in common with the Symbolists, English neo-classicism drew "its name from the fact that it found in classical literature and in contemporary French neo-classical writings models for its literary expression and a group of attitudes towards life and art." In the eighteenth century "Pope himself recognized the vogue of French ideas, but the popularity of Boileau and the French critics in England

7 Noyes, p.xxxv.
8 Ibid., p.xxxv.
9 T.S. Eliot, "Baudelaire" (1930), Selected Essays (Faber and Faber Ltd., 1946), p.386.
coincided with the development of science and with the spread of
the cult of reason, common sense, and the light of nature."\textsuperscript{11}

To achieve a successful literature and a sincere literary
judgment, Eliot and Pope suggest an adherence to the principles
of nature and not just an exclusive adherence to the principles
of man. Pope advises:

First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard which is still the same;
Unerring NATURE, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.\textsuperscript{12}

The "eighteenth century felt a deep nostalgia, not for the
Eden of theology, but for the State of Nature from which man
had somehow departed."\textsuperscript{13}

Eliot felt that the twentieth century had also departed
from a proper reverence for nature and thus he states that
"a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong
attitude towards God, and...the consequence is an inevitable
doom."\textsuperscript{14} Therefore the writer and the critic should not rely
on man-made rules but on those "Rules of old discovered, not


\textsuperscript{12}Alexander Pope, \textit{Essay on Criticism}, in eds., E. Audra and A. Williams (London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1961), lines 68-73. All future references to this poem are taken from this edition and will be internalized using the abbreviation EC followed by the line numbers.


devis'd," which are "Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd" (EC 88-89). This statement "puts into the neatest of nutshells the gist of Augustan doctrine. The rules, they thought, were a formulation of the rationality and order 'discovered' in 'nature'."¹⁵ Thus, although Eliot and Pope are generations apart, they feel as Ezra Pound does when he says that "the natural object is always the adequate symbol".¹⁶

Eighteenth-century neo-classical critics held the belief that art should copy nature: "To live in accordance with nature is the same thing as to live in accordance with reason."¹⁷ The writers believed that in their work they accomplished perfection of nature in a work guided by reason. The neo-classicists embodied their regard for nature in a devout regard for 'the Ancients': "Nature is adherence to general truth; general truth is universally pleasing; the Ancients followed Nature; by observation of the methods of the Ancients the Moderns can most readily learn how best to imitate Nature".¹⁸

An important feature of neo-classicism is the doctrine of imitation, through which authors justified their use and

¹⁶Ezra Pound, from "A Retrospect", in Karl Shapiro, ed., p.16.
¹⁸Francis Gallaway, p.185.
imitation of 'the Ancients'. Eliot, as a proponent of twentieth century neo-classicism, believes in the stringent relationship of the past to the present, as indicated by his statement that no "poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is that appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." Pope is also of the opinion that it is necessary for poets and critics to be conscious of the genius of past poets and critics if they are to be at all competent in their own works. He advises poets to learn "hence from ancient rules a just esteem;/To copy nature is to copy them" (EC 139-140). "You then whose judgment the right course would steer,/Know well each Ancient's proper character" (EC 118-119) is Pope's advice to critics. John Dryden stated that a poet's experimentation with new methods is perhaps often an unconscious exploration of the techniques of the 'Ancients'. An example of this experimentation is the eighteenth-century use of heroic couplets which Dryden says is "not so much a new way among us, as an old way new revived." Through his literary criticism, Eliot has justified the use of the 'Ancients' within an author's own works. Eliot's view on incorporating past literary works becomes particularly clear in "Tradition and the Individual Talent". In this essay he remarks that "we shall often find that not only the best but the most individual parts of a poet's work may be those in which

20 John Dryden, quoted by Clarence C. Green, p.52.
the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. "21 Thus it is the heritage of the author and critic which is important since the "historical sense compels man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer, and within it the whole of the literature of his own country, has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order."22

Greek and Roman literature, particularly Virgil and Homer, was a large part of the education and the literature of the neoclassicists: "The direct imitation of Greek and Roman authors" was a mark of "respect for the Ancients".23 Francis Gallaway observes that although "rational arguments were presented for imitation, it should be evident that imitation could be popular only in a culture which was thoroughly attuned to the idea of the greatness of the classics."24

"Hear how learned Greece her useful rules indites" (EC 92) and "Be Homer's works your study and delight,/Read them by day, and meditate by night" (EC 124-125) advised Pope to both critic and author. Only from the past can we learn "just precepts... from great examples given" (EC 98). Eliot and Pope believed that in order to understand any poetry it is necessary to become acquainted with a poetry from a literary era other than

22 Ibid., p.48.
one's own. Because of the role of the past in shaping civilization - and particularly literature - both Pope and Eliot have emphasized the necessity for a consciousness of tradition.

For Eliot the traditions of the past have merged with the cultures of the twentieth century; in this way "the historical imagination makes the past contemporary." Pope and Eliot incorporated into their own poems lines, images, rhythms, and other kinds of allusions borrowed from an extensive field of historical literary sources. This adaptation of other literary works has enabled both Pope and Eliot to extend the scope of their poetry.

In his central themes, through allusion to past histories and literatures, Eliot stresses that the past is very much a part of the present. This consciousness of the 'oneness' of time is emphasized when he writes in the *Four Quartets* that:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.

Thus, in order to achieve the unity of the past with present and future, like "Vergil, like Janus, Eliot looked behind and

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ahead in the sharpest possible way".  

Imitation for neo-classical practitioners meant many things, including translation of the classics word for word into English side-by-side on the page, adapting a classic into modern translation using modern language and modern customs and characters, and using an old theme in a new poem. For certain writers these approaches could be sincere. However, as Gallaway has noted, authors of slight ability found in the doctrine of imitation a surcease from the pain of original composition, and they bent Horace and the other elegant Roman poets to all the various burdens imposed by the amenities of social life or by the occasional necessities of the Churchman or politician.  

The hypocritical poet in the following passage from Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* steals rather than borrows, and yet, even in stealing from his betters he can create only a mediocre poem:

The Bard whom pilfered Pastorals renown,  
Who turns a Persian tale for half a Crown,  
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,  
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year;  
He, who still wanting, though he lives on theft,  
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left. 

A proper use of the doctrine of imitation, on the other hand, enhances the composition of one's own works.

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28 Gallaway, p.212.

29 Alexander Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, ed., John Butt (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1961), lines 179-184. All future references to this poem are from this edition and will be internalized using the abbreviation EDA followed by the line numbers.
In "The Function of Criticism", Eliot has observed that the second-rate artist, of course, cannot afford to surrender himself to any common action; for his chief task is the assertion of all the trifling differences which are his distinction: only the man who has so much to give that he can forget himself in his work can afford to collaborate, to exchange, to contribute.  

Pope, like Eliot, believed that in order to be fully appreciated, an artist - a poet - should incorporate the best of the artists of the past, as can be noted in his own borrowing from the great classics. "'The best of the modern poets in all languages', wrote Garth to Pope at the beginning of the latter's career, 'are those that have the nearest copied the ancients.'"  

Pope followed this advice and defended his use of imitation in the 1717 Preface to his Works when he wrote that "they who say our thoughts are not our own, because they resemble the Ancients, may as well say our faces are not our own, because they are like our Fathers".  

In a letter to Spence, Pope wrote that he began imitating classical authors, "not out of vanity, but humility: I saw how defective my own things were; and endeavoured to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others." Both Pope

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31 Thomson, p.205.
32 Alexander Pope, quoted by Marks, p.102.
and Eliot felt that modern authors had much to learn from the classics and that the imitation of the great writers of antiquity would mean the application of the most effective remedies to modern ills while providing the modern writer with a "measure of objectivity".  

Even after developing his own poetic theories and techniques, Pope did not stop imitating or borrowing. He furthered his imitation of 'Ancient' authors in order to achieve "the particular composite effects he was aiming at" since he found that his poetry "benefitted from this increased area of sensitiveness which he was requiring in the mind of his reader." In other words, Pope used imitation in his satires to extend their comic effect. Eighteenth-century Augustan criticism argued that "over and above a just Painting of Nature, a learned Reader will find a new Beauty superadded in a happy Imitation of some famous Ancient, as it revives in his Mind the Pleasures he took in first reading such an Author." Neo-classical authors and critics believed that "impossible it is, without deserting nature herself, to dissent from her faithful copiers... [because]...a conscious aim to be different exposes a writer to the risk of artistic barrenness."  

34 Gallaway, p.211.
35 Tillotson, p.144.
36 Ibid., p.144.
37 Marks, p.109.
Pope's verse is "full of allusions to the Humanist classics and his favorite English poets, Spenser, Milton, Dryden and the Restoration writers". The Rape of the Lock is a "mosaic of quotations, parodies, and allusions, derived from the masters of epic and narrative poetry." This borrowing, or imitation, used in Pope's poetry is an example of one of the techniques of neo-classical satire. Even the astute twentieth-century reader enjoys the imitation of Horace, Chaucer, or Milton. Imitators appealed to the pleasure which an educated reader could obtain by comparing ancient and modern manner or even, by the publication of English and Latin on opposite pages, to the delighted surprise at a skillful display of ingenuity in the choice of parallels.

In The Rape of the Lock, for example, Pope combines the satiric imitation of the epic poem with allusions to various authors.

Pope's imitation of famous lines is exemplified in the following extract:

Her love in gilded Chariots, when alive,  
And love of Ombre, after death survive.

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40 Gallaway, p.211.  
41 Alexander Pope, The Rape of the Lock, ed., Geoffrey Tillotsen (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 3rd ed., 1962), Canto I, lines 55-56. All future references to this poem are from this edition and will be internalized using the abbreviation TRL followed by the Canto and line numbers.
lines obviously borrowed from Dryden's *Aeneid*:

The love of Horses which they had, alive,
And care of Chariots, after Death survive.  

Pope appears to borrow some of Milton's effects in *Paradise Lost*, particularly in the angelic spirits, who when parts are severed, are miraculously restored as "th' Eathereal substance clos'd" and they are left uninjured:

Fate urg'd the sheers, and cut the Sylph in twain,
(But Airy Substance soon unites again! ...(TRL III 151-152)

Pope's allusion to the "fatal Engine" closely approximates Milton's allusive irony and echoes Virgil and Dryden.

*The Waste Land* is evidence of Eliot's belief in the uses of the literature of the past within contemporary writing. Indeed, *The Waste Land* is "packed with lines, or hints of lines written by other poets." By hinting at a wide variety of literary sources - both in the words and the rhythm and also in themes - Eliot keeps both his own poetry and the borrowed poetry alive within a twentieth-century context which itself is destined to become the past.

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44 Perhaps Pope is alluding to the "fatal dart" in *Paradise Lost*, Book II, line 786, or "that two handed engine at the door" in "Lycidas", line 30.

In the *Four Quartets* Eliot describes a poet's difficulty in creating a poem which both reflects tradition and yet is an individual creation:

...And what there is to conquer  
By strength and submission, has already been discovered  
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope  
To emulate - but there is no competition -  
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost  
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions  
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.  
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.46

Taking Eliot's admiration for and indebtedness to Dante, as an example, he clearly does not hope to "emulate" Dante, but rather to emphasize Dante's themes in order to "recover what has been lost".

Echoes from *The Inferno* are evident in "Death by Water". Eliot asks the reader to "Consider Phlebas who was once handsome and tall as you."47 Phlebas, a Phoenician sailor "a fortnight dead" (TWL 312), is similar to Phlegyas, the Boatman of Styx, in the eighth canto of *The Inferno*. This echo of Dante serves to remind the reader of the hell of life in *The Waste Land*. Phlegyas also serves as a reminder of the punishment in Hell

46"East Coker", *Four Quartets*, lines 182-189.  
47T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Collected Poems 1909-1935* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1936), line 321. All future references to this poem are from this edition and will be internalized using the abbreviation TWL followed by the line numbers.
after death, as it was he who guided "the flying skiff whose prow/Shot toward us over the polluted channel/With a single steersman at the helm who called:/'So do I have you at last, you whelp of Hell?'"\(^48\)

Tiresias is another character borrowed from The Inferno:

Dante stands in the middle of the bridge over the FOURTH BOLGIA and looks down at the souls of the FORTUNE TELLERS AND DIVINERS. Here are the souls of all those who attempted by forbidden arts to look into the future. Among those damned are: TIRESIAS.\(^49\)

As punishment Tiresias's head is turned backwards on his body so that he must always walk backwards and never look forward again. Eliot makes excellent use of the reminder of Tiresias's punishment since one of the themes of The Waste Land is the futility, and indeed, the sin of foreseeing the future rather than being content with one's God-given present state.

Eliot has commented on the force of Dante's influence: "I still, after forty years, regard his poetry as the most persistent and deepest influence upon my own verse".\(^50\) He continues:

Certainly I have borrowed lines from him, in the attempt to reproduce, or rather to arouse in the reader's mind the memory, of some Dantesque scene, and thus establish a relationship between the medieval inferno and modern life. Readers of my


\(^{49}\) John Ciardi, The Inferno, p.174.

Waste Land will perhaps remember that the vision of my city clerks trooping over London Bridge from the railway station to their offices evoked the reflection 'I had not thought death had undone so many'.

For neo-classical poets the external world offered only imperfect models of nature from which the artist, proud of his independence must select traits here and there to compose the ideally beautiful. The Ancients, however, had already studied the external world and created a second Nature, approved as beautiful by the judgment of two thousand years and doubtlessly superior because it had eliminated the imperfections and confusions of the crude external world.

As a neo-classicist, Eliot objected to Romanticism's lack of objectivity, and restraint, together with its avoidance of traditional ideas. Although Eliot admired Blake's poetry, for example, he nevertheless regretted that Blake's capacities were not "controlled by a respect for impersonal reason, for common sense, for the objectivity of science...[and]...a framework of accepted traditional ideas".

James Thomson has commented that it "is not very easy to discuss the classical background of Mr. Eliot, although it is very distinctly there, because he uses it." Perhaps Thomson finds discussion of Eliot's neo-classicism difficult because, as Eliot himself has acknowledged, the vague meaning of the terms 'romanticism' and 'classicism' limits their

51"What Dante Means to Me", To Criticize the Critic, p.128.
52Gallaway, pp.215-216.
53T.S. Eliot, "William Blake" (1920), Selected Essays, p.322.
54Thomson, p.260.
usefulness:

The danger of using terms like 'romantic' and 'classic' - this does not however give us permission to avoid them altogether - does not spring so much from the confusion caused by those who use these terms about their own work, as from inevitable shifts of meaning in context. 55

Thus, in his essay, "What is a Classic?", Eliot explicitly examines his own meaning of the term 'classic'. He believed that a classic could "only occur when a civilization is mature; when a language and a literature are mature; and it must be the work of a mature mind." 56 At the same time Eliot saw the need for a society with maturity of manners and in command of a well developed "common Style" in literature. Thus, when Eliot or Hulme call for a classical revival, they do not mean an exact return to the stringent rules of society and literature which were prevalent in Pope's era. Rather, they demand a return to basic neo-classical literary theories.

Although the eighteenth century, as Eliot states, was not as it thought itself, "the finest period in English literature", nevertheless it was still a period whose literature Eliot admired and whose literary qualities, he thought, should be both observed and emulated. Thus, although "we have no classic age, and no classic poet in English...we must maintain the classic ideal before our eyes." 58 Eliot felt that there was

56 "What is a Classic?", On Poetry and Poets, p.55.
57 Ibid., p.59.
58 Ibid., p.59.
no need for one period in English literature to be completely classical, since "the period which most nearly fills the classical definition is not the greatest." Instead he believed that "those literatures, of which English is one of the eminent, in which the classical qualities are scattered between various authors and several periods, may well be the richer." Early in the twentieth century T.E. Hulme, friend and advocate to Eliot and Pound, called for a poetry that was formally precise and whose "pretensions are limited to simple and vivid description." Eliot contended that "no sensible author, in the midst of something that he is trying to write, can stop to consider whether he is going to be romantic or the opposite". Nevertheless, it must be conceded that he leaned towards classicism, in Hulme's sense, and in The Waste Land propounds the traditional neo-classical view of the social, moral, and religious limitations of man. T.E. Hulme conceived of romanticism as the belief in man having unlimited potential - romantic man aspires to godhead, to heaven, and believes that he can achieve transcendence. However, classicism, for Hulme, is the belief that man is restricted, a "limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organization that anything can be

59"What is a Classic?", On Poetry and Poets, p.54.
60Ibid., p.54.
61T.E. Hulme, in Shapiro, p.116.
got out of him." Led by tradition, a neo-classical poet would thus write accurately only of the finite world, of man hampered by original sin, a concern which Eliot is obviously in agreement with when quoting Baudelaire:

"In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect endowed with Original Sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never be perfect. Certain secondary results in regard to ordinary human action in society follow from this. A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline - ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary."  

In writing poetry of the 'finite'world, Eliot succeeds in presenting reality in the terms which Hulme recommends for twentieth-century neo-classical poets and which are similar to those which Pope presents for eighteenth-century readers.

While Romantic intellectuals viewed man as having limitless potentiality, neo-classicists conceived of man as "limited, dualistic, and imperfect". The religious beliefs of Pope and Eliot compound with their philosophical and literary beliefs through their bond with classicism. Hulme expresses this outlook by writing that "the essence of romanticism is located in its idolatry of the individual who, for the romantics, should have unlimited powers." Pope and Eliot consistently oppose this type of romanticism. Man should limit his aspirations; he should be content with

63 T.E. Hulme, in Shapiro, p.91.
64 "Baudelaire", Selected Essays, p.392.
65 Thrall, Hibbard and Holman, p.310.
his present life on earth, and not seek to transcend his present state if he is to ever know happiness.

In the "Universal Prayer", Pope states that man should be content with himself and the knowledge that God exists and that God is good:

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:
Who all my Sense confined
To know but this, that Thou art Good,
And that myself am blind. 67

These lines correspond with the notion expressed by Eliot in the Four Quartets, that while many men tend to seek knowledge beyond that which they presently possess, they delve only into the future and not the past. "Maturity of mind...needs history, and the consciousness of history." 68 The past is part of man's present being. The true Christian man should be aware only of his present moment in time - his one-to-one relationship with God - and not be preoccupied with the future:

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint. 69

Thus one aspect of the neo-classical outlook is a sense of the finiteness of man, supplemented perhaps by a need for an orderly religious hierarchy.

It was T.E. Hulme who led the revolt of early twentieth-century neo-classical writers against the superfluous and

68 "What is a Classic?", On Poetry and Poets, p.60.
69 "Dry Salvages", Four Quartets, lines 199-202.
hazy use of language, especially epithets, which he felt were "'beads on a chain', physical things carrying no reality. Against words he opposed the image as a unit and the analogy as an instrument of thought".\textsuperscript{70} One of the most striking features of The Waste Land is the imagery, which follows the pattern laid by Hulme, who advocated "new and original ways of saying things" if "poetry was to be accurate", "a new kind of imagery: fresh, unusual metaphors and analogies."\textsuperscript{71} Hulme believed that "all emotion depends on real solid vision or sound. It is physical."\textsuperscript{72} Since plain speech "is essentially inaccurate", it is only by "new metaphors" that it can be made precise. Therefore Hulme advocated a poetry in a visual sense where each word "must be an image seen, not a counter."\textsuperscript{73}

Ezra Pound, who had a great influence on Eliot's thinking and who was in turn influenced by Hulme, led the Imagist movement, which advocated the following literary rules:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{72} T.E. Hulme, \textit{Notes on Language and Style}, p.10.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.11.
\textsuperscript{74} Ezra Pound, from "A Retrospect", in Shapiro, p.105.
In the composition of his poetry, especially *The Waste Land*, it is well known that Eliot was guided by the rules formed by Pound and the Imagist movement.

In many respects Pope's criticism conforms to Pound's Imagistic criteria. He also recommended "direct treatment of the 'thing'", observing that the elaborateness of conceit, for example, only clouds the poet's subject. A poet who attempts to show his intelligence through wit, conceit, and wordiness is not a poet of craft. Like Pound, Pope directs poets to "use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something" for "words are like leaves, and where they most abound,/Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found." (EC 309-310) The poet of poor quality attempts to hide his inability to express his thoughts behind glittering verbosity:

Some to Conceit alone their taste confine
And glittering thoughts struck out at every line;
Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring Chaos and wild heap of wit. (EC 289-292)

In his poetry Pope expressed the need for direct, concise, and non-mechanical poetry:

Poets like painters, thus, unskilled to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True Wit is Nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;
Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind. (EC 293-300)

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75Ezra Pound, from "A Retrospect", in Shapiro, p.106.
These views are also expressed by Eliot in the *Four Quartets* where he considers the proper manner of creating a memorable poem:

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph.  

Pound, Pope, and Eliot believed, as Hulme has phrased it, that there should be "a poetry that is formally precise and whose pretentions are limited to simple and vivid description." At the same time, they also lamented that defect of contrived poetry which forced the words to fit the rhythm. Many people review poetry, Pope wrote, not "for the doctrine but the music there." (EC 340) Pope, while discussing the fault of rhythmically contrived poetry, illustrated that fault through exaggerated rhythmical use in the following lines:

These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowells tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes.

"Little Gidding", *Four Quartets*, lines 214-225.

Krieger, p.33.
Two hundred years later Pound expressed the same sentiment in prose when he objected that "the words are shovelled in to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme sound."  

He added, when a poet uses "a symmetrical form, [a favorite of Pope and the neo-classicists] don't put in what you want to say and then fill up the remaining vacuum with slush." 

In harmony with neo-classicist principles, Eliot's style is "precise and concentrated; he experiments with form, as the classics and neo-classics like Pope rarely did, but he is never formless, as his imitators too often are." 

Thus Eliot uses the discipline of poetic form which neo-classical tradition felt necessary to encapsulate thought. Pound struck the right balance when he wrote that the "rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning."

Although impressively at ease in discussing all periods of English literature, Eliot seems most comfortable with neo-classicism. He focuses considerable attention upon seventeenth and eighteenth-century poets, as well as on satire, and he has high praise for both Dryden and Pope:

'Waller was smooth' indeed, but his smoothness is feebleness, compared to anything accomplished by Dryden or Pope himself: the smoothness of an ambling pad-pony compared to that of a fiery horse with an expert rider.

78 Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect", in Shapiro, p.105.
79 Ibid., p.105.
80 Thomson, p.261.
Eliot's similarity to these neo-classical writers can be felt in the following comment on that period:

> English literature between 1660 and 1798 was predominantly a prose literature. Of the poets who wrote between those dates the names of a bare half dozen live in the memory. Dryden and Pope, moreover, we are apt to think of as critics rather than as poets - critics of society and institutions as well as of literature.  

As with Pope and Dryden, Pound and Eliot are often thought of as critics as readily as they are regarded as poets.

In a discussion of Pope's relationship to Eliot, one cannot ignore the influence which John Dryden has had upon both poets, for as Eliot wrote: "Dryden is a successor of Jonson, and therefore the descendent of Marlowe; he is the ancestor of nearly all that is best in the poetry of the eighteenth century." The neo-classical era had been much maligned, and Eliot found himself constantly defending Dryden and Pope from adverse literary critics: "It used to be thought the poetic styles of Dryden and Pope were artificial. One has only to compare them with the style of Dryden's immediate predecessor, Abraham Cowley, to prove the contrary."

Even in the eighteenth century Dryden was defamed by certain poets and critics. Alexander Pope, however, was not one of these critics, and he recalled that it "was Dryden who made Will's coffeehouse the great resort for the wits of

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83 Clarence C. Green, p. 232.
84 T.S. Eliot, "John Dryden" (1921), Selected Essays, p. 305.
85 "John Dryden", in Homage to John Dryden, p. 10.
Like Eliot, Pope recognized Dryden's greatness and believed that the literary heritage which Dryden created would endure: "what Timotheus was, is DRYDEN now." (EC 383)

Fame is fleeting; only great poetry and great poets are recognized and perpetuated, as Pope contends in the following passage:

No longer now that golden age appears,
When Patriarch wits survived a thousand years:
Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare three score is all even that can boast;
Our sons their fathers' faulty language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be. (EC 478-483)

Eliot's admiration for eighteenth-century writers is reflected in his technique and themes. In this connection critics have often stressed the importance of Eliot's moral tone. However, very little comment has been made on his satire, and it is in the practice of the satirist's art that Eliot and Pope seem particularly to concur. The satirist is the critic of society - commenting on, and attacking varieties of hypocrisy and affectation.

Eliot believed in satire as an influential form of poetry, and condemned those people who were too dull to realize its importance:

...their insensibility does not merely signify indifference to satire and wit, but lack of perception of qualities not confined to satire and wit and present in the work of other poets whom these persons feel that they understand.

To those whose taste in poetry is formed entirely upon the English poetry of the nineteenth century - to the majority - it is difficult to explain or excuse Dryden: the twentieth century is still nineteenth, although it may in time acquire its own character.  

Similarly, Pope observed that many seventeenth and eighteenth-century readers missed the strength of Dryden's satiric art and that others who perceived the aim were blinded by personal prejudice and refused to see the artistry of Dryden's poetry, which Pope thought both perceptive and refined:

Parties in Wit attend on those of State,  
And public faction doubles private hate.  
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,  
In various shapes of Parsons, Critics, Beaus;  
But sense survived, when merry jests were past;  
For rising merit will buoy up at last. (EC 456-461)

From the neo-classicist viewpoint, the role of the poet as critic is vital. Dryden plays an influential role in the poetic criticism of both Pope and Eliot because he laid the foundation upon which many influential neo-classicist poets have created their own poetry. Similarly, Eliot saw Pope as an example of a poet who has molded a literary heritage and created a poetry which will last through time:

For 'influence', as Dryden had influence, a poet must not be so great as to overshadow all followers. Dryden was followed by Pope, and a century later, by Samuel Johnson; both men of great and original genius, who developed the medium left them by Dryden in ways which cast honour both on them and on him.  

88 "John Dryden", in Homage to John Dryden, p.6.
Both Pope and Eliot have commented extensively on the composition of poetry and prose and on the practice of literary criticism. In "The Perfect Critic", Eliot stated that the artist is, "each within his own limitations - oftenest to be depended upon as a critic; his criticism will be criticism, and not the satisfaction of a suppressed creative wish - what, in most other persons, is apt to interfere fatally."  

In the Essay on Criticism, Pope holds the same opinion as Eliot on the matter of the author as critic:

In Poets as true genius is but rare,  
True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share;  
Both must alike from Heaven derive their light,  
These born to judge, as well as those to write.  
Let such teach others who themselves excel,  
And censure freely who have written well. (EC 11-16)

Pope and Eliot regard successful authors as the best qualified and least partial critics.

In their assessment of literary critics, Eliot and Pope pinpoint faults which diminish the power and veracity of a critic's words. The faults of many critics are not found in their manner of writing, but rather in prejudices and partialities which are reflected in their criticism. In "Johnson as Critic", Eliot blames Johnson for his whimsical ability to ignore faults in one author which he recognizes in others. The "versification is sometimes no better than that of a schoolboy's exercise", writes Eliot of Blackmore's "Creation"; Johnson, he writes,

in discussing Blackmore "must have been blinded to the defects which he would have reproved in Dryden or Pope". The principal reason for this blindness may have been given in Pope's Essay on Criticism:

Of all the Causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is Pride, the never-failing vice of fools. (EC 201-204)

In Pope's opinion, pride stands in the way of a critic's honest judgment. Pride makes the critic believe that it is his opinion - and his alone - which is the only evaluative truth. Eliot has written that the critic "if he is to justify his existence should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks." It is pride which makes many critics look only to their own intelligence rather than consulting with fellow critics. The critic "should endeavour to...compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible, in the common pursuit of true judgment." As Pope so aptly comments in a couplet of advice to the critic:

Trust not yourself; but your defects know,
Make use of every friend - and every foe. (EC 213-214)

Eliot believed that readers should abandon the critics who refuse to "collaborate" - who refuse to abandon their personal prejudices in favour of an objective elucidation and evaluation of a work of art. He came to suspect that the

90 T.S. Eliot, "Johnson as Critic" (1944), On Poetry and Poets, p.194.
91 T.S. Eliot, "The Function of Criticism" (1923), Selected Essays, p.25.
92 Ibid., p.25.
arbitrary critic "owed his livelihood to the violence and extremity, to other critics, or else to some trifling oddities of his own which he continues to season the opinion which men already hold and which out of vanity and sloth they prefer to maintain." As Pope stated, each critic believes his own opinion and caters to his own foibles even though he is placing his opinions before the public readers:

Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not Critics to their judgment too? (EC 17-18)

because:

'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own. (EC 7-8)

And when the critics find strong point in an author's works, perhaps it is because they, like "we but praise ourselves in other men." (EC 455)

This vanity makes the critic an unreliable commentator on literature, since it evokes emotions which prejudice his views: "[A] literary critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art". Eliot's insistence that the critic should approach art with an impartial critical opinion is well known. The critic "must not make judgments of worse or better. He must simply elucidate; the reader will form the correct judgment for himself." Pope also expresses this opinion when he comments that we "can not blame indeed", (EC 242) but in "every work regard the writer's End". (EC 255)

95 Ibid., p.11.
The critic and the reader can both enjoy literature, and learn from it if they are receptive:

A perfect Judge will read each work of Wit
With the same spirit that its author writ:
Survey the WHOLE, nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The generous pleasure to be charmed with wit. (EC 233-238)

Although he should not make oppressive judgments, the critic who prescribes rules and dissects poetry for the mere purpose of dissecting and prescribing is not performing his job, according to Eliot: In "matters of great importance the critic must not coerce." In order to be of value, criticism "must always profess an end in view, which, roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste." Pope too instructs the critic as to the manner of approaching the education of the reader:

'Tis not enough, your counsel still be true;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do;
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot. (EC 572-575)

Pope's opinion unites with Eliot's belief that the "dogmatic critic, who lays down a rule, who affirms a value, has left his labour incomplete." Often in the process of elucidating the work of art,

96 "The Perfect Critic", The Sacred Wood, p.11.
the critic, although not emotionally biased, can become too narrow in his analysis of form. The "purely 'technical' critic - the critic, that is, who writes to expound some novelty or impart some lesson to practitioners of an art - can be called a critic only in a narrow sense."  

Pope's views are similar:

Neglect the rules each verbal Critic lays.
For not to know some trifles, is a praise.
Most Critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the Whole depend upon a Part:
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one loved Folly sacrifice.  

(Ec 261-266)

Eliot disapproved of the twentieth-century trend in literary criticism "which seems to demand of poetry, not that it shall be well written but that it shall be 'representative of its age'." This is a complaint which Pope also voiced. Poets laboured under the misconception that they had to write by rote the 'same' poetry as the successful poets of their age. The attempts by hacks to imitate Pope's success in articulating the spirit of his age is ridiculed in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot:

One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:
One from all Grubstreet will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.  

(EDA 109-112)

101 Pope's disdain for hack writers is particularly revealed through his ridicule of Benlowes, "famous for his own bad Poetry and for patronizing bad Poets" (Pope's second footnote to the Dunciad III). Pope commented, in the Dunciad III line 21, that "Benlowes, propitious still to blockheads, bows".
In addition, poetry written according to the ephemeral taste of an age may be lacking in the qualities of 'good' poetry.

Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste and sense. (EDA 159-160)

Similarly Eliot's preference for fixed standards of taste is evident in his criticism:

I wish that we might dispose more attention to the correctness of expression, to the clarity or obscurity, to the choice of words whether just or improper, exalted or vulgar, of our verse: in short to the good or bad breeding of our poets. \(^{102}\)

If poetry is to be sincere it should be written from the heart - written as Eliot says of The Waste Land - "to relieve [the poet's] emotions" and as "a purely personal act". \(^{103}\)

In the seventeenth century, John Dryden, in A Defence of an Essay on Dramatic Poesy, wrote that it was the poet's concern "to affect the soul, and excite the passions, and above all, to move admiration". \(^{104}\) Similarly, for Pope, the genuine poet conveys his deepest sense of reality to the reader, while the shallow poet writes only to show off his learning - or for the money he will receive:

Each Wight, who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each Word-catcher, that lived on syllables. (EDA 165-166)

Regimented art was seen in the worship of Aristotle in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Aristotle was a pillar of neo-classical criticism. Pope wrote that there are

\(^{102}\) The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p.25.
\(^{103}\) T.S. Eliot, recorded by Richard Case, "T.S. Eliot in Concord", American Scholar XVI (Autumn 1947), p.44.
\(^{104}\) John Dryden, quoted by Clarence C. Green, p.113.
Those critics who conclude that "all were desperate sots and fools,/Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules." (EC 271-272) Eliot believed that "Aristotle is a person who has suffered from the adherence of persons who must be regarded less as his disciples than as his sectaries. One must be firmly distrustful of accepting Aristotle in a canonical spirit." Both the critic and the poet, according to Eliot and Pope, should not follow rigid technical principles, such as those of "Aristotle [who] had what is called the scientific mind." Judging a writer of one era by the stringent rules established many centuries previous is a grievous critical error. As Pope put it: "To judge therefore [sic] of Shakespear by Aristotle's rules is like trying a man by the Laws of one Country, who acted under those of another."

106 Ibid., p.13.
107 Alexander Pope, quoted by Clarence C. Green, p.99.
CHAPTER II

Neo-classical Themes in Pope and Eliot

What The Rape of the Lock was to the Augustans... The Waste Land has become to the Moderns. It is inescapable.  

In "What is a Classic?", Eliot maintained that "unless we are able to enjoy the work of Pope, we cannot arrive at a full understanding of English poetry." The implication is that the reader who is unable to appreciate the themes and forms of eighteenth-century neo-classical satire will be unable to appreciate the complex themes of later poetry. Similarly, the reader who does not appreciate the neo-classical concepts expressed in Eliot's literary criticism and poetry cannot come to a full understanding of his work and of the modern poetry which was influenced by him.

Neo-classical poetry is concerned with society and man's daily life: "By comparison with other times, neo-classical literature is markedly social and urban. Though he starved in a Paris slum or a Grub-street garret, the poet felt himself a part of society". The Rape of the Lock and The Waste Land show the incompatibility between traditional moral standards and actual ways of living in the context of the social mores of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

109 "What is a Classic?", On Poetry and Poets, p.60.
110 Marks, p.19.
The most famous poems of Pope and Eliot are not only outstanding examples of the poetry of their age but also epitomes of neo-classical satire, especially in their conspicuous didacticism. The role of the satirist, whatever his century, is to reform society. In *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot relates the problems of reforming society to the proper concept of what is right and what is wrong. In his prose writing as well as in much of his poetry, Eliot often examined the moral structure of society:

Any machine, however beautiful to look at and however wonderful a product of brains and skill can be used for bad purposes as well as good: and this is true of social machinery as of constructions of steel. I think that more important than the invention of a new machine, is the creation of a temper of mind in people such that they can learn to use a new machine rightly. More important still at the moment would be the diffusion of knowledge of what is wrong - morally wrong - and of why it is wrong.\(^{111}\)

Although satire was not a popular medium in the early decades of the twentieth century, Eliot used satire extensively, probably taking his lead to some extent from Pound's venture with "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" which appeared just prior to the publication of *The Waste Land*.

Neo-classical concepts are always related to their cultural and social setting, to neo-classicism in the broadest sense.\(^{112}\) With regard to twentieth-century neo-classicism, T.E. Hulme believed that a "poem should be clearly defined..."

\(^{111}\) *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p.98.  
\(^{112}\) *Marks*, p.vii.
as an accurate presentation of the reality of 'exquisite moments', without 'moaning or whining about something or other.'

Pope and Eliot present reality in the terms which Hulme suggests. They do not write merely of the beauty of life and nature, but rather concentrate on the daily moments in man's life in the light of the historical shadow of mankind. This neo-classical concern with man and his civilization is humanism, one of the major distinguishing factors of neo-classical literature.

The neo-classical artist sees "the imagery of common life...the imagery of the sordid life of a great metropolis". The poet-satirist converts this sordidness and pettiness of contemporary life into arresting images which create beautiful and incisive poetry. In relation to this poetic transformation, Northrop Frye has observed that we "are getting close to one of the fundamental facts about satire: that the sardonic vision is the seamy side of the tragic vision." Pope and Eliot both examine the sordidness of contemporary life. With his conservative, historical perspective, Eliot perceives the evils of western man's warped emotional and spiritual values. He sees the waste of our civilization not "as a single moment in history, particular to the West in the twentieth century,"


114 "Baudelaire", Selected Essays, p.388.


but as "an inclusive, comparative vision, a perspective of history." 117

In neo-classical satire, such as Eliot's and Pope's, corruption of the ideal "is almost always at least implicit, it only rarely appears as the sole subject of the satire. The basic polarity of an ideal (usually in the past) and the degenerate present provides a useful frame for the argument of a satire". 118 Authors in the neo-classical tradition look to the classical past for perfection in art and society, seeking to teach their society the need for a change from the present abandonment of taste and culture. For neo-classicists, there is a chaos of values in the unfortunate emphasis on current experience, and their remedy to this chaos can be found in a respect for the hierarchy of values evident in the classical tradition.

Eliot believed that man is "not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living." 119 As neo-classicists and satirists, then, Pope and Eliot do not encourage the creation of a new state of society but expose the decadence in the existing situation and encourage a consciousness of firm historical values. Often, the satirist

117 Southam, p.69.
sees "the fact that the society of the present does not repudiate the old forms but rather conceals its own perversion behind them, paying virtue the compliment of hypocrisy." 120

In *The Waste Land* and many of his other poems, Eliot espouses the theme of emotional and spiritual sterility exemplified in the decadence of twentieth-century society, a vision which to some extent he gained from his readings of Baudelaire. Writing in the age of Queen Anne, Pope too pursues the theme of emotional and spiritual sterility. *The Rape of the Lock* also exhibits a world in which it has been observed that "in its vanity and self-satisfaction, it is too little concerned for other people". 121

One of the most decadent scenes in *The Waste Land* is that of Tiresias's observation of emotional sterility in the copulation of the typist and her young man. Tiresias witnessed the mockery of love through lack of emotion in the so-called 'love act'. With the satirist's merciless eye for detail, Eliot has Tiresias pay close attention to the minute details of feminine undergarments: "stockings, slippers, camisoles and stays" (TWL 227) and "out of the window perilously spread/Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays" (TWL 224-225). Since a combination is a feminine undergarment which covers a woman's body from the top of her bosom, over the waist and thighs, Eliot takes advantage of its

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likeness to the feminine form to emphasize the emptiness of the physical relationship which is central to the scene. The garment, like the typist later in the scene, is "perilously spread", ready to accept a lover, and like the typist, it is empty, void of any animation. The garment is spread in acceptance previous to its owner's actual acceptance, a foreshadowing of what is to come, so that the reader can be like Tiresias in perceiving the scene and foretelling the rest.

In addition to feminine garments, Eliot also makes note of feminine frailties and habits - the "one half-formed thought" "Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over" (TWL 251-252) while the typist "smoothes her hair with automatic hand." (TWL 255) The man's actions, however, are as automatic as the young woman's reactions. He is assured of his victory; his advances are mock-heroically described as an assault and his success as the winning of a battle. It is the battle of the sexes and the young man is confident that he will emerge the victor:

He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,  
One of the low on whom assurance sits  
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire. (TWL 231-234)

This small pimply young clerk:

Endeavours to engage her in caresses  
Which still are unreproved; if undesired.  
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;  
Exploring hands encounter no defence. (TWL 237-240)

Although the act has not been forcible rape, the young man has
forced his advances on a young woman who does not desire him. There is no enjoyment in the 'act of love' for either the man or the woman. The sex act has become as automatic as the smoothing of hair or the playing of a gramophone.

Pope, in a somewhat analogous fashion, describes the manner in which male lovers attain their conquests as he describes those feminine foibles which account for the male's easy assault. Cantos II and III of The Rape of the Lock open with views of the trivial thoughts and conversations with which the women of the court passed their time. Women in The Rape of the Lock equate the "staining" of their honour with the staining of a "new brocade" dress or the missing of a masquerade ball. Pope's Ariel, like Tiresias, sees the mockery of love, the concern with triviality and the failure to respond to life seriously. The men, personified by the Baron, treat love as a conquest of the female of their choice. This conquest is described mock-heroically like a crucial stratagem:

Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a Lover's toil attends;
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends. (TRL II 31-34)

Thus in the poem, Belinda's hair is raped, forcefully taken, and this act is symbolic of the rape of the woman herself. The male and female characters of both poems fail to perceive the value of love in their shallow and destructive parodies of the traditional ritual of courtship.
The matter of sexual relationships is central to both Eliot and Pope: "For Eliot, of course, a superb trinity of culture, sex, and religion is humanity's most worthy goal and the sickness of modern civilization is that the three impulses operate in isolation." 122

Both Pope and Eliot depict the cutting irony of western society's ambivalence towards love and the sex act. In The Rape of the Lock, for example, women are "faced with a both-and paradox: the desire not to be violated and yet explicit preparation for it." 123 The women in both poems are repelled by the thought of violation and yet feel forced by the conventions of their sex to submit to men's advances. This sense of false morality and hypocrisy of values is presented in The Rape of the Lock through the secret prayer for violation which lurks in Belinda's heart concurrently with her complaints of loss. Her protests at violation are directly voiced:

Forever cursed be this detested day,  
Which snatched my best, my favorite curl away!  
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,  
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen! (TRL IV 147-150)

The epigraph to the poem, however, reveals Belinda's secret desire: "I was unwilling Belinda, to ravish your locks; but rejoice to have conceded this to your prayers." (TRL translation of the epigraph, from Martial)

122 Hamilton, in Martin, p.107.  
Sex, in both *The Waste Land* and *The Rape of the Lock*, is sterile - it gives neither propagation of life nor fulfillment of pleasure. Most of the women in *The Waste Land*, as in *The Rape of the Lock*, are not married. In addition, although the married women in the pub section of "A Game of Chess" have brought forth children as a result of sexual union, these offspring are not the desired issue of love. The lack of love between husband and wife and the lack of love for children are illustrated in the following lines:

(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

... Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?  
(TWL 159, 161-162)

"It is all symptomatic of the boredom of love which is degraded in contemporary society to a mechanical relationship."

Although marriage is sanctioned by the church as the moral union of man and woman, the characters in Pope's and Eliot's poems either spurn it or misuse it. Marriage was traditionally sanctioned by Christian Churches for the purpose of propagating future generations:

The various characters who appear in *The Waste Land* have this in common: they are misusing their sexual capacities in ways which make them quite literally barren, so that in their sexual activity they sow death instead of life."124


Lil, in "A Game of Chess" has stopped the life process, having had an abortion: "It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said." (TWL 159)

Central to both Pope and Eliot is the theme of the degradation of western values and the vices which arise from this degradation. Pope wrote that "disdain and indignation against vice is (I thank God) the only disdain and indignation I have. It is sincere, and it will be a lasting one."126 The degradation is pictured in waste and inherent lack of purpose, often symbolized by physical waste – the alleys and the garbage. In The Waste Land Eliot symbolizes the want of purpose through images of ugliness and desolation – the "stony rubbish" (TWL 23), the "dead tree" (TWL 115), the "White bodies naked on the low damp ground/And bones cast in a low dry garret,/Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year" (TWL 193-195), and the "Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit" (TWL 339).

The strong moral basis of Eliot's depiction of contemporary society can be seen in The Idea of a Christian Society in which he commented that "it does not require a Christian attitude to perceive that the modern system of society has a great deal in it that is inherently bad",127 due essentially,

127 The Idea of a Christian Society, p.32.
he believed, to the underlying disintegration of classical
political, religious, and sexual values. While the target of
The Rape of the Lock appears to be superficial, that of
feminine vanity - there are deeper themes involving the
condemnation of vice. Living in a waste land, both Pope's and
Eliot's characters are unable to make qualitative judgments
about events. The characters in The Rape of the Lock, for
example, prefer appearance to reality and thus live in an illusory
world. They have no concept of the reality of the wasted
world created by their own insensibility - a world in which
they will be forced to live trapped for the rest of their
lives. Thus, Belinda and her compatriots are puppets of the
society which they themselves sustain and they suffer the
consequences. The "crowd flowed over London Bridge" (TWL 62),
Eliot's allusion to Dante's Inferno, dramatized in the soulless
individuals marching over the bridge into Hell's inner circle,
is akin to the fate of the individuals in Pope's world who
are at the mercy of a self-serving population in which "hungry
judges soon the sentence sign,/And wretches hang that jurymen
may dine" (TRL III 21-22).

It has been observed of Eliot and it might be said of Pope
that the "purposelessness of life is disguised by a rest-
lessness of action and a concentration on minor events."128
The inhabitants of the waste lands of Pope and Eliot are
interchangeable as they "drank coffee, and talked for an

128 Cahill, p.42.
hour" (TWL 11) and then "sometimes counsel take - and sometimes tea" (TRL III 8) or "soothing chocolate".\textsuperscript{129} To fill the void of their lives the characters in "various talk the instructive hours they past,/Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last" (TRL III 11-12). The only change comes in the games of chess and ombre which ultimately decide the characters' fate.

Chess moves in \textbf{The Waste Land} represent the steps in a love affair in which the lovers plan "What shall we do to-

morrow?/...And we shall play a game of chess,/Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door." (TWL 133, 136-138) Eliot, in his notes on the poem, refers to "the game of chess in Middleton's \textit{Women Beware Women}\textsuperscript{130} in which the chess moves represent the steps in a seduction. In the game of ombre played in \textit{The Rape of the Lock}, although it is Belinda who wins the game, her exuberance in winning leads to her symbolic seduction, the rape of her lock by the Baron.

Peter Quennell compares the card game in \textit{The Rape of the Lock} to a miniaturization of society:

Pope...extended his range by describing the world of cards, which form a miniature court inside a court, painted replicas of the courtly personages who fill the room and press around the table...If the human protagonists are epic heroes and heroines skillfully reduced to comic size, the cards are reductions of


reductions, the diminutive counterparts of already diminished figures...it is indeed a work 'where the little becomes gigantic.'

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot chooses both cards and chess to represent society's movements. In chess, the pieces represent human figures whose movements in the game symbolize the activities of the various characters in the poem. Just as the Queen is the most prominent figure in the game of chess, it is the female who is the dominant figure in *The Waste Land*. It is a female, Madame Sosostris, who casts Tarot cards and foretells the future, and whose cards structure the basic themes of the poem. The first Tarot card which she sees is the man with three staves which symbolizes ideals and hope. The reversed meaning of this card, however, is more significant to the poem. Reversal represents rejection and loss which overtakes all of the characters in *The Waste Land*. The blank card represents the fool - folly, irrationality, indiscretion, thoughtlessness. Even the reversed meaning of this card is applicable to the themes of *The Waste Land*. The reversal means a faulty choice, a hesitation - apathy and negligence. In both Eliot and Pope, the characters have a narrow outlook which affects both their inward responses and outward actions. In *The Waste Land*, as the Tarot predicts, they tend to evade the realities of both their inner and outer worlds.

Although the fortune teller does not turn up the Hanged Man, this card does have an influence on the tone of *The Waste

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Land. The Hanged Man represents life in suspension, a failure to give of one's self and a preoccupation with one's self. The aristocratic Marie, "the typist home at teatime", "the young man carbuncular", the women in the pub, the lady on the "burnished throne" - all of the characters fail to give of themselves, as typified in the following passage:

> The wind under the door.  
> What is that noise now?  What is the wind doing?  
> Nothing again nothing.  
> 'You know nothing?  Do you see nothing?  Do you remember  
> 'Nothing?' (TWL 117-122)

A vacuum. An unwillingness to make the necessary effort of living and caring. The characters do not even use their senses. The pretence of sensuality in love-making is a merely mechanical passion in an apathetic world in which people hang in suspension.

The concluding card which Madame Sosostris casts is that of "crowds of people, walking round in a ring" (TWL 56) which closely resembles the description of the Tarot card of 'Judgment' and also resembles the crowds of people condemned to walk around in the circles of Hell. All the preceding negative predictions of the Tarot culminate in the reversed position of 'Judgment' - delay, postponement, failure to face facts, unhappiness, indecision, disillusionment and procrastination. However, in choosing 'Judgment', Eliot has selected a most appropriately optimistic symbolic card to conclude the vision of the future. The positive meaning of the card "suggests

Few of the characters are found moving in harmony with their society or their natural surroundings since they are constantly seeking a meaning for their lives outside of traditional values. Two characters who embody false values and who can be closely paralleled are Madame Sosostris of The Waste Land and Ariel of The Rape of the Lock. It is Madame Sosostris who gives a reading of the future and presents a warning. In Canto I of The Rape of the Lock, Ariel also reads the future and gives a warning. While Ariel uses only Astrology, the "clear Mirror or thy ruling Star" (TRL I 108), Eliot's "famous clairvoyante" (TWL 43) combines both the reading of Tarot cards and Astrology to foretell the future. Ariel foresees some dread event and warns Belinda by saying:

> I saw alas! some dread event impend,  
> Ere to the main this morning sun descend,  
> But heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:  
> Warned by the Sylph, oh Pious Maid beware!(TRL I 109-112)

Like Ariel, Madame Sosostris sees some evil event portending and like Ariel she does not know what that event is. She sees many omens, reads many cards:

> Here is the man with three staves and here the wheel,  
> And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,  
> Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,  
> Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find  
> The Hanged Man. Fear death by water. (TWL 50-54)

Although she gives her prediction, or warning, it is projected so far into the future and is so vague that it does not help the characters in *The Waste Land* to cope with their present problems and evils. Madame Sosostris represents the ironic superstitiousness of much contemporary religious feeling.

As a young man, Eliot fell away from his family's religion, Unitarianism, and became an agnostic. He neither professed nor denied God, but rather sought proof through knowledge for establishing a religious position. In order to find peace with himself, however, he found that he could not totally abandon religious belief, and thus sought some type of faith. Searching for something to fill the religious void, he explored Buddhism, other eastern religions, and mysticism which all aided in his teaching in 1915 when he "returned to America and became a lecturer in comparative religions." He continued to seek a religious commitment, and hence turned to explore the concept of Catholicism, which in turn through his friendship with Lord Halifax led him to the modified Catholic statement of the Church of England.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a good many intellectuals deliberated about and rejected Christianity. This deliberation can be seen in the early struggles of the young T.S. Eliot, who, like many late Victorian agnostics, believed strongly that religion, liturgy, and worship were things of the past. Eliot's conservatism,

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which emerged in his adoption of Anglicanism came at a time when strict adherence to a religion was unpopular. Although published in 1922, prior to Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism in 1927, *The Waste Land* shows signs of his exploration of various religions and his struggle with the problem of deciding whether or not to adopt Christianity. One section of the poem which shows the presence of Anglicanism is "The Burial of the Dead", an adaptation of the title of the funeral service of the Church of England, "The Order for the Burial of the Dead".

Pope, like Eliot, also went against the intellectual currents of his day as far as religion was concerned. Pope was Roman Catholic, and strictly adhered to his faith. He "professed his religion steadfastly, rejecting the invitations of powerful friends, Oxford and Atterbury, that he come over with them and enjoy the political emoluments to which his genius entitled him."  

Throughout his career as a poet, Pope kept his firm belief in Catholicism, as witnessed in many religious references and symbols in his poetry. He declared his faith openly in a letter to Jonathan Swift in which he claimed to be "of the religion of Erasmus, a catholic".  

In the early eighteenth century, with the decline of religious fervor, religious poetry also declined both in

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bulk and popularity. Peter Quennell remarks that since the
"death of Henry Vaughan in 1695, something had gone out of
English devotional verse." Addison, one of the few poets
who ventured to write religious poetry, illustrated eighteenth-
century religious concepts in this hymn:

The Spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame
Their great Original proclaim. 137

Addison's hymn "illuminates the Augustan conception of religious
poetry: a form of Loyal Address presented to the Divine
Sovereign, rather than the record of a private Spiritual
adventure." 138 In his "Messiah: A Sacred Eclogue", published
in the Spectator, May 14, 1712, Pope too adopts the formal and
objective mode rather than a personal testament of his
faith, and yet he manages to temper his poem with a certain
amount of personal sentiment.

Both Pope and Eliot feel that western society has let
non-essential trappings take predominance in religion,
resulting in a loss of the sense of what is vital to the
salvation of man and his soul. Eliot and Pope believe that
when man becomes aware of God he gains release from his
tainted nature through release of energy in the process of
increasing love for God and his fellow man.

136Quennell, p.54.
137Joseph Addison, "The Spacious Firmament on High",
Restoration and Augustan Poets, eds., W.H. Auden and Norman
138Quennell, p.54.
To the anthropological eye beliefs, religions and moralities are human habits - in their odd variety too human. Where the anthropological outlook prevails, sanctions wither. In a contemporary consciousness there is inevitably a great deal of the anthropological, and the background of The Waste Land is thus seen to have a further significance. To be, then, too much conscious and conscious of too much - that is the plight: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?"  

The modern fondness for dissection of man's intimate life - his environment, social relations, culture and religion - tends to disintegrate the very fabric of human existence. Man loses his beliefs; he loses the impetus to observe laws and customs, and he loses moral judgment. The "academic analysis of religion and the actual practice of the religious life seemed to Eliot almost antithetical. He preferred, as always, to adopt the non-academic point of view."  

Pope and Eliot share a sense of man's fundamental and unchangeable limitations - in addition to their common belief in Christianity. As a result of their beliefs, both poets delve into the ageless problem of human inadequacies and the possibility of the resolution of these inadequacies through religion. In Notes Towards the Definition of Culture, Eliot remarked that "no culture has appeared or developed except together with religion: according to the point of view of the observer, the culture will appear to be the product of the religion, or the religion the product of the culture."  

139 F.R. Leavis, in Hugh Kenner, p.91.  
140 Robert Sencourt, p.52.  
Religion is clearly obsolete in The Waste Land:

In this decayed hole among the mountains  
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing  
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel  
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.  
It has no windows, and the door swings.

(TWL 386-390)

In this scene of decay, even the graves are "tumbled". All that remains of religion are decaying symbols of a belief that once was. An example of this lack of tradition and the corruption which follows it can be found in the person of Eliot's Jew in "Gerontian" whose lack of a clear heritage is evident in that he was "Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp/Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London." In The Rape of the Lock, although the actual Arabella Fermor was associated with a social heritage, the character Belinda spurns tradition, heritage, the values of religion, sex roles, and marriage.

For Pope and Eliot as neo-classicists, man's problems and evils are a result of the abandonment of high standards of taste and morality, the disintegration of various traditions associated with civilization, particularly moral traditions. In their poetry, both men explore the 'sham' religion of occultism - man's urge to know the future. The exploration of the occult is not man searching for religion and self-knowledge, but rather an avoidance of self by avoiding the one-to-one dependent relationship with God, which is

essentially an introspective matter. Eliot is opposed to occultism because it appears to be man's search for ultimate knowledge - the Faustian self-destructive desire to have all the answers.

The original Fall of Man occurred because man wanted to achieve godhead - to know all that God knew. Western man falls and fails in his daily life because he too wants to achieve ultimate knowledge. In a passage on the occult in the *Four Quartets*, Eliot tells of his disapproval of man's futile search of the occult for knowledge of the future in contrast with the ultimate knowledge of Christ - "The point of intersection of the timeless/With time". 143 This disapproval is expressed in the following lines:

To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits  
To report the behavior of the sea monster,  
Describe the horoscope, haruspicate or scry,  
Observe disease in signature, evoke  
Biography from the wrinkles of the palm  
And tragedy from fingers; release omens  
By sortilege, or tea leaves, riddle the inevitable  
With playing cards, fiddle with pentagrams  
Or barbituric acids, or dissect  
The recurrent image into pre-conscious terrors -  
To explore the womb, or tomb, or dreams; all these are usual Pastimes and drugs and features of the press:  
And always will be, some of them especially:  
When there is distress of nation and perplexity  
Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgeware Road.  
Men's curiosity searches past and future  
And clings to that dimension. 144

The well-ordered ceremonies of occultism - Tarot cards, horoscopes, and spiritualism - replace genuine religious

143 "Dry Salvages", *Four Quartets*, line 202.  
144 Ibid., lines 184-200.
ceremonies in the society of Eliot's *Waste Land*. The "Son of man", who is also the son of God, no longer is present in modern man's world; he is no longer the root or the branch of religion because religion is either dead or in suspended animation, all that is left is a "heap of broken images" (TWL 22). Replacing a Christian-based religion - the true religion - Eliot sees the occult as represented by Madame Sosostris "with a wicked pack of cards." (TWL 46)

Mysticism was rejected by the neo-classicists in favour of Deism; thus it is only natural that neo-classical writers would shy away from the supernatural and the occult and attend to the earthly state of man. Part of the neo-classical viewpoint is the belief in the reality and value of Providence, which expresses itself in the ordering of nature and in perceptive guidelines for human behavior. Hulme observed on one occasion:

That part of the fixed nature of man is the belief in the Deity. This should be as fixed and true for every man as belief in the existence of matter in the objective world. It is parallel to appetite, the instinct of sex, and all the other fixed qualities.145

In the *Essay on Man*, Pope argues that man's momentary happiness is contingent upon his ignorance of the future. The inability to foresee future events is the basis of man's hope of a better future state since "hope springs eternal in

145 Hulme, in Shapiro, p.93.
the human breast". 146 Most of the things by which man lives are based on faith - the liberating life-giving feeling in Christ which results in content in man's daily life. Pope believes that lack of foreknowledge is a gracious gift given by God to ensure man's momentary happiness:

Heaven from all creatures hides the book of Fate, 
All but the page prescribed, their present state.147 ...
Oh blindness to the future! kindly given148

Because, as Pope writes:

One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT. ...
The first, last purpose of the human soul; ...
know, where Faith, Law, Morals all began,
All end, in LOVE OF GOD, and Love of MAN.149

By his addition of the sylphs in the revisions of The Rape of the Lock Pope placed in the poem some clear sign of the society's warped religious order. The sylphs, gnomes, and nymphs which appear in the poem are based on the forms found in the Rosicrucian religion which Pope learned from Comte de Gabalis. Commenting on the hierarchy of Pope's preternatural beings, George Wilson Knight wrote that:

We have a graduation, as it were, from one concrete living whole to the next; from words, concrete or abstract nouns or verbs, to 'personification' as a literary figure to dramatic entities such as the

147 Essay on Man, lines 76-77.
148 Ibid., line 85.
149 Ibid., lines 337-339.
sylphs and gnomes of The Rape of the Lock; from
there to a gallery of actual personalities and
there to society and the nation.\textsuperscript{150}

This ordering of the natural world and spirit world is of
importance in setting the lives of the characters in the
context of traditional values. As Pope wrote:

\begin{quote}
The use of these machines is evident: since no
epic poem can possibly subsist without them, the
wisest way is to reserve them for your greatest
necessities: when you cannot extricate your hero
by any human means, or yourself by your own wit,
seek relief from heaven, and the gods will do
your business very readily.\textsuperscript{151}
\end{quote}

Eliot too makes use of the machinery of the gods, nymphs,
and sylphs borrowed from ancient religious myths. The sylphs
and nymphs are traditional guardians of female chastity.
In "The Fire Sermon" Eliot writes that the "nymphs are
departed" (TWL 175), and for emphasis repeats this statement.
This insistence can be interpreted as the departure of
chastity and morality as well as the departure from the
belief in the spiritual world.

In place of belief in a Deity, the societies satirized
by Eliot and Pope have warped values and beliefs which are
derided through the religious rites which have been incorporated
into the poems. Both Pope and Eliot juxtaposed religion and
female vanity, for example, to create a conflict of Religion
and Eros. Both The Waste Land and The Rape of the Lock come to

\textsuperscript{150}George Wilson Knight, Laureate of Peace (London:

\textsuperscript{151}Alexander Pope, "The Art of Sinking in Poetry. For
Machines" as quoted in "Introduction" to The Rape of the Lock
focus on a rich woman's toilet. The details of cosmetics, jewels, trinkets, and other paraphernalia used to adorn the women and their bed-chambers are described as if the articles are ordered for some religious rite. Belinda in The Rape of the Lock and the upper-class woman of Eliot's canto "A Game of Chess", are seen in "sacred rites of pride" (TRL I 128). The women comb their hair and adorn themselves in order to become virtual goddesses for the men with whom they will come into contact.

Participants in the "rites of pride", these women are symbolized in the juxtaposition of serious religious objects with cosmetic trinkets. Belinda has on the dressing table her celebrated collection of "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux." (TRL I 138) The Bible, a Christian symbol, the story of western religion, is tossed alongside cosmetics and old love letters. In The Waste Land, Eliot presents the Jewish Menorah, the seven-branched candlestick, as shedding light on all the trivia in the woman's room and on her dressing table:

...the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of the seven-branched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it
From satin cases poured in rich profusion. (TWL 78-85)

In both instances religious objects have been profaned in the erotic lives of rich and frivolous women. To both
poets this overshadowing by the erotic and materialistic
over the spiritual represents an important facet in the
decay of civilization.

The incongruity of a society which pretends humility,
respect, and belief when none truly exists is illustrated
by the following lines from The Rape of the Lock:

On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore
Which Jews might kiss and infidels adore. (TRL II 7-8)

With Chaucerian irony, the Christian symbol of the cross is
worn in mockery merely as a frivolous adornment to set off
the beauty of Belinda's white breast rather than as a symbol
of her beliefs.

In the court society which Pope depicts, everything must
be correctly ordered for pleasing appearance. This necessity
is reflected in the description of the tea party at Hampton
Court, whose meticulous order intimates a religious reverence
for perfection and beauty. The trays on which the cups are
carried are even referred to as "altars":

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery Spirits blaze;
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide (TRL III 105-110)

The spoons, cups, and trays which resemble articles arrayed
for a religious ceremony symbolize the cult of shallow
correctness of eighteenth-century society.

As with eighteenth-century society, twentieth-century society,
as seen by Eliot, is overly conscious of a superficial sense of order.
There are strong parallels in this respect, in the original and discarded draft of "The Fire Sermon" and between Eliot's description of Marie's society in the opening of "The Burial of the Dead" and Belinda's world in The Rape of the Lock. Marie, the girl of the hyacinth garden, describes her past to a male companion who shares her memories. Her lover reflects on his failure when he says "I was neither/Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,/Looking into the heart of light, the silence." (TWL 39-41) His existence, as the lives of the other characters in The Waste Land, is a picture of life in death, death in life - a life unaware of its potentialities, uncertain even of the reality of its own existence. There is a fine nostalgia, though, as Eliot paints an evocative picture of the "shower of rain", the "sunlight", "the Hofgarten" and "the hyacinth garden", the happy moments of past love recalled by the statement "You gave me hyacinths first a year ago". (TWL 35)

Marie's life is ordered by her position in society, as indicated by her childhood stay at the "arch-duke's", her summer at Starnbergersee, and her habit of spending winters in the south. Her social regimentation is dominant both in her description of her social life and in the pride in her birthright, since she is aware of being not Russian, but German: "Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch." (TWL 12)

In The Rape of the Lock the characters also lack a strong sense of self-awareness, and yet, as previously discussed, they have a strong sense of social status. Belinda's
preference for forms is expressed in her speech at the end of Canto IV when she thoughtlessly implies that she would rather have lost her chastity than her glorious lock of hair. When there is no morality or inward beauty to accompany physical beauty:

How vain are all these glories, all our pains,  
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains:  
That men may say, when we the front-box grace:  
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!' (TRL V 15-18)  

As in The Rape of the Lock, the didactic nature of The Waste Land becomes apparent in the fifth section, "What the Thunder Said". In this section Eliot inserts a number of direct religious allusions and pronouncements. The voice of "the third who walks always beside you" (TWL 360) - perhaps the spirit of God - becomes embodied in the thunderous voice whose words form the moral summation of the poem. The advice given by the "thunder" is "Datta" (TWL 402); "Dayadhvan" (TWL 412); "Damyata" (TWL 419), which Eliot has taken from a Hindu Upanishad. Translated, this advice is Give; Sympathize; Control. These pronouncements are applicable to the neo-classical religious position, which advocates that one should give of one's self, sympathize with man's condition, and control one's actions in life - comparable to Hulme's position on classicism. Eliot concludes The Waste Land with the closing blessing of an Upanishad: "Shantih shantih shantih" (TWL 434), "'The Peace which passeth understanding' is our equivalent to this word."152  

that if man follows the moral prescription, given in the three words of "What the Thunder Said", the result will be the long awaited peace in life in The Waste Land.
CHAPTER III

Neo-classical Form in Pope and Eliot

In The Rape of the Lock by "placing so much emphasis on the 'moral' of the epic, Pope was contributing to the epic tradition as he understood it. To him, the tradition was not even remote, let alone dead. His views of the heroic tradition were somewhat akin to those of T.S. Eliot, whose firm belief in the continuity of tradition is expressed in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and 'The Function of Criticism'".153

In the neo-classical literature of the eighteenth century - and verse satire in particular - it was necessary to exhibit exacting principles of form in order to illuminate the poet's central moral themes. The "eighteenth century was classical in its respect for authority".154 Poets were "to maintain standards, copy models and patterns, comply with conventions, and chastise lawlessness."155 The pitfall was the eighteenth-century cult of poetic 'correctness'. Eliot's comment on this type of devotion was that "tradition without intelligence is not worth having"156 because "tradition cannot mean standing still."157 Hack writers may pursue the 'cult of correctness', but writers of merit, such as Dryden, Pope and Eliot, "however formal their style, were always driving at things and people, at least in their most

155 Ibid., p.47.
156 After Strange Gods, p.19.
characteristic work; they did not just embroider familiar themes with traditional graces." 158

The form of the satires of Pope and Eliot involves a humorous distortion of the familiar whose purpose, nevertheless, is to bring the reader into terms with reality. Eliot's consciousness of the nature of satire can be realized in his comment on didactic poetry, which he believed to be poetry of moral exhortation which, as with

some of Dryden's poems, in the seventeenth century, are satires in the sense that they aim to ridicule the objects against which they are directed, and also didactic in the aim to persuade the reader to a particular political or religious point of view. 159

The art of the satirist is characteristically that of distorting a contemporary incident which offends reason into a fiction which becomes central to his satire. This change from the natural perspective to the distorted indicates the absurdity of the existing criticized condition in society. The satirist often juxtaposes the contemporary world with a historical or fictional world in order to perform the traditional function of satire - the education of the reader to the error of his ways, customarily the errors of vice and folly.

The satirist either subtly or obviously indicates the moral nature of his work through his techniques. By attacking vice obliquely, the satirist pretends to celebrate that which he despises; he speaks for example "with enthusiasm of utopias

158 Thomson, p.207.
which he proves to be wastelands". A primary tool of the satirist, verbal irony is an inversion of the poet's actual meaning. The words carry the opposite intention of what they ordinarily mean and as such they serve to illustrate incongruities in actual situations, as in the belief by the Baron and the "young man carbuncular" that they are accepted, even welcomed, by the women whom they seek to exploit.

"Satire is not for the literal-minded. It exists on at least two levels, the overt and the implied". The reader must recognize the conflicting sense of values pointed up by irony in order for this device to be successful. Often the reader will uphold one set of standards while the personae of the satire uphold another. An example of this juxtaposition of contrasting values can be seen in The Rape of the Lock where Belinda tosses "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux" (TRL I 138) together on her dressing table as if they all have the same purpose and importance. Similarly, in order to emphasize normal expectations about spring, alongside the neurosis of his narrator, Eliot offers the following celebrated juxtaposition:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain. (TWL 1-4)

Spring has become not a joyous awakening but instead a cruel pain forcing new life into the world. With the satirist's ironical vision, Eliot has reversed the conventional evocation of the season.

In 1939 Eliot stated that man was placing too much faith in his own power to control the world:

We are all dissatisfied with the way in which the world is conducted: some believe that it is a misconduct in which we all have complicity; some believe that if we trust ourselves entirely to politics, sociology, or economics we shall only shuffle from one makeshift to another.\(^{162}\)

Pope also expressed fear about the 'over-confidence' and 'over-reaching' of civilized man and disgust with the greed in government, the church, and commerce. In the third Moral Essay he criticizes the underlying materialism which causes men to be "sunk in lucre's sordid charms".\(^{163}\) In the Imitation of Horace, Pope commented how men are "alike in nothing but one lust for gold".\(^{164}\) Eliot's misgivings about the snare of materialism is similar to Pope's:

Perhaps the dominant vice of our time, from the point of view of the Church, will be proved to be Avarice. Surely there is something wrong in our attitude towards money. The acquisitive, rather than the creative and spiritual instincts are encouraged.\(^{165}\)

\(^{162}\) The Idea of a Christian Society, p.98.


\(^{165}\) The Idea of a Christian Society, p.97.
The satires of Pope and Eliot were intended to break up "stereotypes, fossilized beliefs, superstitions, terrors, crank theories, pedantic dogmatism, aggressive fashion, and all other things that impede the free movement of society."\^166 They are concerned with man's lack of insight about himself, believing that "most people are purblind, insensitive, perhaps anaesthetized by custom and dullness and resignation."\^167 They insist, in short, that readers be made to "see the truth - at least that part of the truth which they habitually ignore."\^168

The satirist has been characterized as "a responsible critic of men and manners who gives the rules of a happy and virtuous life".\^169 In such works as The Idea of a Christian Society and After Strange Gods, where Eliot clearly acts in the role of moral critic, the frailty of contemporary civilization is expressed in statements which are similar to the satiric targets in his poems. For Eliot, poetry - and satire in particular - was not an unchecked emotional outpouring, but a work of fastidious selection. In fact, great poetry, he believed, might "be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever".\^170 "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression

\^166 Northrop Frye, in Allen and Stephens, p.20.
\^168 Ibid., p.19.
\^169 Kernan, p.8.
of personality, but an escape from personality."\textsuperscript{171}

Satire involves condemnation of society by reference to an ideal through the satirist's efforts in measuring the aberration from the idea.\textsuperscript{172} The societies of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries seemed to Pope and Eliot to be 'over-confident' in their material success: "When the metaphysicians were demonstrating that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds a number of major writers were pointing out that a great deal...was wrong."\textsuperscript{173} Nevertheless, typical of neo-classical artists, Pope and Eliot strove for a balanced vision. Pope, for example, in the \textit{Essay on Man} shows how the Great Chain of Being illustrates the beauty of God's order in the world. On the other hand, in \textit{The Dunciad} he creates a picture of growing darkness and evil where men behave as they would if they reversed the Chain of Being, as Pope predicted in \textit{Essay on Man}:

\begin{quote}
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.  
Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,  
Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel:  
And who but wishes to invert the laws  
Of ORDER, sins against th' Eternal Cause.\textsuperscript{174}
\end{quote}

More than eighteenth-century neo-classical satirists, Eliot varied the form of satire, experimenting, for example, with fresh rhythms and a new sort of collage effect in \textit{The Waste Land}, because he saw "poetry as having a social

\textsuperscript{171}Tradition and the Individual Talent", \textit{Selected Essays}, p.21.  
\textsuperscript{172}Willey, p.101.  
\textsuperscript{173}Ibid., p.100.  
\textsuperscript{174}\textit{Essay on Man}, I, lines 126-130.
function of vitalizing the language of its audience in order to vitalize their perceptions of the world."

As Harry Rutledge remarks of *The Waste Land*:

This utterly engrossing, fascinating poem reflects, and yet breaks with, the past; it blends the historical past with the historical present; it freely combines the majestic mythological prophet Tiresias with a pathetic stenographer and her coarse 'young man carbuncular'.

By examining the scenes and techniques in Pope's and Eliot's poetry, the reader can observe the close relationship between their practice as neo-classical satirists.

In connection with Eliot's satire, one recalls F.R. Leavis's observation that *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* was a poem of such a startling new style that it "must indeed have been difficult to take seriously in 1917". The poem is difficult to take seriously because it is a satire in the mock-heroic mode. Eliot burlesques the epic through the contrast of Prufrock's amusingly trivial stature with the serious theme of man's timidity in approaching both life (aging) and death.

Prufrock begins with the traditional epigraph which sets forth the theme which will be maintained throughout the poem. The translation of the epigraph, an adaptation from Dante's *Inferno*, reads:

> If I believed that my reply were made to one who could ever climb to the world again, this flame would shake no more. But since no shade

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175 Krieger, p.51.
176 Rutledge, in Morford, p.144.
ever returned - if what I am told is true - from this blind world into the living light, without fear of dishonour I answer you.  

The epigraph is fitting since Prufrock's voyage through life becomes an extended mock-epic of Dante's voyage through Hell.

Eliot uses mock-heroic structure to emphasize the irony in Prufrock's speeches - the nauseating image of Prufrock's balding head upon a platter in contrast with his actual situation surrounded by "tea and cakes and ices", and a life measured out "with coffee spoons" (LSP 51):

Though I have seen my head (Grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter I am no prophet - and here's no great matter; I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker, And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker, And in short, I was afraid. (LSP 80-84)

Here, as elsewhere, Eliot "solemnly dresses his contemporaries [Prufrock, the aging clerk] in epic robes too large for them, and confidently puts Achille's spear in hands which cannot hold it." Although Prufrock says that he is no prophet, by implying a relationship between his stature and that of St. John, he has drawn a heroic comparison. But Prufrock is not brave; he is not great; his moment of greatness will never kindle into the flame of success, it will only flicker. Even death snickers at the insignificance of this man who faces neither life nor death with courage.

178 The Inferno, XXVI, lines 58-63.
179 The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, Collected Poems 1909-1935, line 77. All future references to this poem are taken from this edition and will be internalized using the abbreviation LSP followed by the line numbers.
180 Kernan, p.82.
'Burlesque' has come to be commonly known as a type of theatrical show which includes strip-tease dancing, broad humour, and short skits, all of which have a heavy sexual emphasis. Although burlesque literature is not usually related to theatrical burlesque, some shared features of the two are comparable:

The sexual, mixed with the scatological, offered the satirist the most expressive symbol he could find for the exposed private world. It is, of course, an area of experience he persistently turns to when he wishes to remind man of his unheroic, animal self.\textsuperscript{181}

Typical of satire in general, the burlesque does not involve a series of scenes which resemble a plot, but instead consists of "loosely related scenes and busyness [sic] which curls back on itself".\textsuperscript{182} In a literary burlesque, the author presents short scenes resembling caricatures or cartoons of individuals or situations which place heavy emphasis on the sexual aspect of man's life. These 'skits' are 'given' by the author as a type of comic amusement for the reader in which the characters provide the song, dance, and humour comparable to the mélange of theatrical burlesque.

Burlesque is like a sounding board which picks up and sends out sympathetic vibrations - similar to the scientific principle of resonance frequency. The original vibrations are picked up and distorted to become new vibrations. Thus there is a mimetic quality to burlesque, as exemplified in Pope's \textit{Dunciad} which is a distorted imitation of Dryden's satire \textit{MacFlecknoe}.

\textsuperscript{181}Paulson, p.107.
\textsuperscript{182}Kernan, p.100.
In the *Dunciad*, Pope uses low burlesque to depict weak and wicked individuals who are degraded distortions of persons who were prominent in seventeenth and eighteenth-century society. Man is blind to reality and has created exalted images of himself. In the *Dunciad*, Pope's dunces are an example of this perversion, for they believe themselves to be great wits:

> Turning his voice, and balancing his hands.  
> How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue!  
> How sweet the period, neither said, nor sung!\(^{183}\)

These lines are Pope's comment on J. Henley, the orator, who preached only for profit and the pleasure of hearing the sound of his own voice. The burlesque is meant to show the incongruity between the "noble vision of rational man and the hateful spectacle of his actual behavior."\(^{184}\)

In the *Dunciad*, the dunces construct heroic images of themselves, monuments to their self-importance, and in so doing they reveal their pettiness and bad taste:

> Kind Self-Conceit to some her glass applies,  
> Which no one looks in with another's eyes:  
> But as the Flatterer or Dependent paint,  
> Beholds himself a Patriot, Chief, or Saint. (D IV 533-536)

While beholding themselves as patriots, chiefs, and saints, the dunces show themselves as they actually are—obscene boors who participate in urinating contests, noise-making, and

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\(^{183}\) Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*, ed., James Sutherland (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963), 3rd edition, revised, *Dunciad* III, lines 200-202. All future references to this poem are from this edition and will be internalized using the abbreviation D followed by the book and line numbers.

mud-slinging. In some instances Pope contrasts the Grubstreet ugliness with the classical heroic scene.

Pope parallels the squalor of the dunces' world with their offences against the dignity and moral seriousness of the author's vocation. He comments wryly on "Curll's chaste press" (D I 40) when Curll actually was a book-seller who published, not chaste, but obscene books. "Now Night descending, the proud scene was o'er/But lived in Settle's numbers one day more" (D I 89-90) comments on Settle, the official poet of London who wrote rhymes of topical events. He did not take pride in his work as a poet, but wrote only for the honour and financial compensation. The most pungent burlesque in The Dunciad is that of Thomas Osborne. Pope writes that Osborne was actually a book-seller in Gray's Inn who published advertisements for a year together, pretending to sell Mr. Pope's subscription books of Homer's Iliad at half the price: Of which he had none, but cut to the size of them (which was quarto) the common books in folio, without Copperplates, on a worse paper, and never above half the value.  

In The Dunciad Pope diminishes Osborne by making him the first of the dunces to accept the challenge in the urinating contest:

The Goddess then: "who best can send on high
The salient spout, far-streaming to the sky: (D II 161-162)

... First Osborne leaned against his lettered post;
It rose, and laboured to a curve at most. (D II 171-172)

... A second effort brought but new disgrace:
The Wild Meander washed the Artist's face: (D II 175-176)

185 Alexander Pope, footnote 24, to the Dunciad II.
Pope hopes, however, that the decay and sordidness which is exemplified in The Dunciad can somehow be reversed so that the world becomes pure again, perhaps through a process similar to that exemplified in the following couplet:

So clouds replenished from some bog below,
Mount in dark volumes, and descend in snow. (D II 362-363)

As Pope's Dunciad burlesques Dryden's Macflecknoe, Eliot in The Waste Land uses low burlesque treatment of Richard Wagner's Ring operas. In "The Fire Sermon" Eliot degrades the stature of the three Wagnerian Rhine Maidens to the three immoral Thames daughters. They echo the original German and Norse legends of Wagner's operas through their chorus of "Weialala leia/Wallala leialala" (TWL 77-78) which is a combination of the various chants of the Rhine Maidens. In the original legend the three maidens were supernatural daughters of the river. Eliot distorts them into human women with human follies and human vices. The Rhine Maidens are always coy and ready for a sexual chase; they tempt lovers but never accept their advances. The women of Eliot's poem, although repulsed by sexual advances, passively accept their lovers. One of the daughters of the Thames narrates the events of her love affair:

'Trams and dusty trees.
Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.' (TWL 291-294)

In The Rhinegold the river is pure, a "dark green surge"; "silvery light"; "the flood around flows a stream as of stars"
and "flashes the foam".  

In *The Waste Land* we see irony in Eliot's description of the Thames, which, rather than being a life-giving, purifying source and a beauty of nature, is an ironic reminder of death by drowning and a symbol of stagnation through pollution. On summer nights, the river carries the city's litter - "bottles, sandwich papers,/Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends" (TWL 176-177). There is rotting slime and vegetation as "A rat crept softly through the vegetation/Dragging its slimy belly on the bank" (TWL 187-189). The river exudes the wastes of industry and transport as it "sweats/Oil and tar." (TWL 266-267) Eliot attempted to show the readers the evils in the excesses which led to the creation of *The Waste Land* of the modern world.

In treating the *Ring* operas as a travesty, however, Eliot has also chosen the Norse legend for its own subtly inherent themes which are also stressed in *The Waste Land*. *The Rhinegold* is the beginning of the *Ring* cycle, and the beginning of the curse which becomes the devastation, the toppling of the Gods from their classic position. The rape of the Rhinegold from the care of the three Rhine Maidens could only be accomplished if the attempted possessor was willing to renounce the pleasures of love. Alberich Nibelung considered love only in the lustful sense and therefore cursed love, becoming the possessor of the gold and the instigator of the curse. Because of his materialism, love was lost in the kingdom of the Gods. However, at the end

of the cycle love was transferred to humanity on earth.

The greed of the Gods is diminished in The Waste Land to the greed of mankind:

We are being made aware that the organization of society on the principle of private profit as well as public destruction, is leading to both the deformity of humanity by unregulated industrialism, and to the exhaustian of natural resources, and that a good deal of our material progress for which succeeding generations may have to pay dearly.¹⁸⁷

Man has forfeited love, and thus the sex act has become boring "'life-giving' cheery automatism of the modern world."¹⁸⁸ The juxtaposition of material greed and lack of love has led to the vacuity of "My people humble people who expect/Nothing" (TWL 304-305).

By reference to the burning of Carthage in "Burning burning burning burning/O Lord Thou pluckest me out/O Lord Thou pluckest/burning" (TWL 308-311) Eliot makes a connection with the end of the Ring cycle through the burning of Siegfried on the funeral pyre, simultaneously reminding man of self-destruction. Thus, while Wagner drew on and preserved the classic stature of the magnificent ancient German and Norse legends, Eliot, in creating a travesty of the Ring cycle, has demeaned the stature of the characters and their actions within the framework of the legend.

There are a number of elements in an epic poem which

¹⁸⁸ "Baudelaire", Selected Essays, p.391.
author can successfully burlesque in order to create an effective mock-epic poem. Features of the epic which appear in both Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* and Eliot's *The Waste Land* are: the proposition or epigraph, invocation, prayers, sacrifice to the gods, appearance of the goddess, prophecy, epic feast, and epic battle.

The epigraph to *The Waste Land* is a quotation of a few lines from a speech by Trimalchio in *Satyricon*, which is translated:

> For once I myself saw with my own eyes the Sybil at Cumae hanging in a cage, and when boys said to her, 'Sybil, what do you want?' she replied 'I want to die'.

This epigraph states a death wish which is connected to the futility of wanting foreknowledge and the futility of a life without God. The epigraph to *The Rape of the Lock* is an adaptation of a quotation from Martial which, as has already been discussed, illustrates Belinda's perverse desire for violation.

Another prominent opening feature of the epic and the mock-epic is the invocation, which is an introductory appeal for help of the Muse - the poet asking for aid or intercession. In *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope applies his invocation to his friend John Caryll who suggested the actual event of the cutting of the lock as a theme for Pope's poem: "This verse to CARYLL, Muse! is due". (TRL I 3) By dedicating *The Waste Land* "For Ezra Pound il miglior fabbro" (the better craftsman)

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190 Ibid., p.59.
Eliot directly expressed his indebtedness to Pound for his masterful assistance in revising the poem.

Prominent in most epic poetry is a prayer by the hero for success in battle. In *The Rape of the Lock*, however, the hero is a heroine, an amusing twist of Pope's high burlesque. But it is not Belinda whom Pope has pray for success; it is the Baron who is the adversary in the poem:

> For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implored Propitious heaven, and every power adored, But chiefly Love... (TRL II 35-37)

> ... Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize (TRL II 43-44)

In *The Waste Land* Eliot has changed the epic prayer into images of a barely remembered God. The closest resemblance to the epic prayer comes in the statement: "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" (TWL 30). This line refers to chapter twelve of Ecclesiastes which recalls the preacher praying - "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" - for the end of your life will soon come and then "shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity."¹⁹¹ The prayer is obviously applicable to the theme of the poem, since man in Eliot's modern world is a vain creature who is sensitive not to God but to the occult.

In both Pope and Eliot the art of burlesque is seen in those debased sacrifices in the contemporary world which are

¹⁹¹Ecclesiastes xii, verses 1, 7-8.
made in contrast with noble past sacrifices. In *The Rape of the Lock* the Baron's sacrifice to the gods consists of an altar to the Goddess of Love, built of "twelve vast Romances, neatly gilt./There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;/And all the trophies of his former loves;/With tender Billet-doux he lights the pyre,/And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire." (TRL 39-42) In *The Waste Land* Eliot hints at many sacrifices made: the sacrifice of death echoed by the "rattle of bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear" (TWL 186); Philomel's sacrifice of her human body in the change to bird form in order to escape rape "by the barbarous king" (TWL 99); woman's sacrifice to male sexual demands, represented by the typist's physical (sexual) sacrifice; the sacrifice of Tiresias, locked in a transvestite body and forced to watch the sordid sexual union of man and woman which he has reluctantlv foreseen; the sacrifice of nature to the greedy materialism of mankind indicated by the oil and tar of the polluted river; the sacrifice of the Rhinegold to the greed of the Nibelung; and the final reminder of sacrifice through the burning of Carthage, sacked and burned as a sacrifice to the memory of Roman dead - "Burning, burning" - the fire which consumes and purifies.

In *The Rape of the Lock* Pope plays the supernatural off against natural life using mock-heroic effects. Belinda makes some absurd appearances as an 'earthly' goddess, the first being in Canto I, where jewels deck "the Goddess with the glittering spoil" (TRL I 132). However, when the heavenly Goddess of Love
makes her presence felt, Belinda becomes an inferior goddess. It is within Love's power to grant the wishes of the Baron. Love, however, believes it necessary to aid the moral goddess Belinda and thus provides her with "Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues" (TRL IV 84) and "fainting fears,/ Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears" (TRL IV 85-86), all of which are an attempt to nudge the Baron into returning his prize and into begging forgiveness of the now flawed, and merely human heroine. In *The Waste Land* the goddess makes her appearance in "A Game of Chess" where she sits upon a "burnished throne" and is attended by golden cupidons of love. In Eliot's poem the goddess is also of earthly origin, and her purity is flawed by insignificant sexual contact with earthly lovers.

The prophecy is an important element in the plot of an epic or mock-epic poem. In *The Waste Land* Madame Sosostris gives the prophecy "Fear death by water" (TWL 55). Eliot uses the low burlesque to undercut the plausibility of the famous clairvoyante's prediction, showing her as a merely human forecaster whose powers are impaired by a bad cold. Ironically, she "nevertheless/Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe" (TWL 44-45). She prophesies with assurance: "Here, said she,/ Is your card" (TWL 47-48), but she is fearful of her own uncertain future: "One must be so careful these days." (TWL 59) The meaning of her cards is clear within the total context of the poem, but it is a meaning that is hidden from her, and
thus she is powerless to give genuine aid to the characters
whom she 'guides'.

In The Rape of the Lock, Ariel, Belinda's guardian nymph,
sees himself in the absurdly melodramatic role of her 'guide'
through life. The nymph prophesies "oh pious maid, beware!/
...Beware of all, but most beware of man!" (TRL I 112, 114)
Ariel is a supernatural being, but his abilities lie only in
predicting the future. He is powerless to control Belinda's
thoughts or actions, for he perceives an "earthly Lover
lurking at her heart" (TRL III 144) which leads to her care­
lessness and loss of the lock.

The epic battle in The Rape of the Lock is reduced to a
battle of cards and words, which, though, covers a fierce
battle of the sexes. The epic battle in The Waste Land also
becomes a battle of the sexes. Like Pope, Eliot also makes
reference to many historic battles. The sounds of battle
reverberate in the "shouting and the crying/Prison and palace
in reverberation" (TWL 335-336). There are the "Falling
towers" of "Jerusalem" [the 1917 battle when the British
recaptured Jerusalem from the Turks] "Athens" [the battle of
Thermopylae] "Alexandria" [named for the great warrior Alexander
the Great] "Vienna" [remembered for the Arch-Duke Ferdinand
whose assassination caused the first World War] "London"
[bombed by the Germans in the first World War] (TWL 373-375). The
hero of Eliot's poem becomes mankind, fighting the battle
against the meaninglessness of modern life.
The epic feast, which precedes battle, is diminished in *The Rape of the Lock* into "the smoking tide" (TRL III 110) of the coffee party. In *The Waste Land* this feast is reduced even more in dignity for it is represented by the typist who "lays out food in tins." (TWL 223)

The powerful gods of the epic have become, in *The Rape of the Lock*, minute gnomes and sylphs which guard feminine vanity, while in *The Waste Land* the gods have completely vanished and even the "nymphs are departed." (TWL 178)

The warrior's shield, usually magically endowed, which protects him from death, is reduced in both *The Rape of the Lock* and *The Waste Land* to the heroine's petticoats and undergarments which, while they remain in place, protect the female body from violation. In *The Waste Land* the petticoats and feminine garments are removed and are exposed to the sun's rays, and are drying on the window sill, thus permitting access to the woman herself.

In the original draft of *The Waste Land*, Eliot inserted a section in "The Fire Sermon" which was, both in style and theme, a direct imitation of *The Rape of the Lock*. Eliot meant this parody as a compliment to Alexander Pope, whom he considered "a master of miniature."192 Ezra Pound, however, managed to persuade Eliot to omit this section in the revision of the poem. Eliot recalls this revision:

I remember that Pound once induced me to destroy what I thought an excellent set of couplets; for, said he, 'Pope has done this so well that you cannot do it better; and if you mean this as a

192"John Dryden", *Selected Essays*, p.310.
burlesque, you had better suppress it, for you cannot parody Pope unless you can write better verse than Pope - and you can't. 193

Perhaps this direct parody of Pope was inserted by Eliot to indicate in a more direct fashion than the poem as it now stands that The Waste Land was intended to be a burlesque. The scene of the typist and her lover in "The Fire Sermon" is a particularly clear example of a high burlesque, written in mock-epic style, just as the scene involving Madame Sosostris in "Burial of the Dead" and the scene involving the three river maidens in "The Fire Sermon" are examples of the low burlesque.

High burlesque flourished in the classical literature of Greece and Rome. Therefore it is only natural that the neo-classical authors - who modelled their work on classical background and principles - should imitate the burlesque. The Rape of the Lock is Pope's tribute to the epic. He once expressed the wish that he could have written an epic poem, but he succeeded instead in writing an excellent mock-epic poem. In The Rape of the Lock Pope has taken the elements of the epic and created a high burlesque modelled after The Aeneid which he reduced to five poetic cantos. He treated the cutting of a lock of hair with the cataclysmic impact of the rape of Helen of Troy.

Because of the nature of burlesque, the poet does not create characters with individualistic and distinct personal

qualities and habits. Instead he creates characters who are representative of their sex or station in life: "what [the satirists] care about is their relationship to certain enduring archetypal roles."¹⁹⁴ His characters must be truly representative, yet distorted versions of the originals. The characters' actions are represented in exaggerated cartoons through which the satirist, such as Pope, attacks their "strict adherence to the authority of tradition...[which] tended to reduce human behavior to codes of etiquette and respectability".¹⁹⁵ The magnification of the details of the tea service and toilet table exemplifies the importance which the ladies of the eighteenth century placed on the daily ceremonies. Pope observed that "the ancient Poets are in one respect like many Modern Ladies. Let an Action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance."¹⁹⁶ Thus through parody the author "makes the work, or the form, look ridiculous by infusing it with incongruous ideas, or exaggerating its aesthetic devices."¹⁹⁷

Although English neo-classical poets did not create their own epics, they carefully studied classical epics and satires. Pope's verse brings the classical epics to mind by often directly echoing them. In cantos two and four of The Rape of

¹⁹⁴Wright, p. 61.
¹⁹⁵Noyes, p.xx.
¹⁹⁶Alexander Pope, in a letter to Arabella Fermor, prefacing The Rape of the Lock.
¹⁹⁷Gilbert Highet, p.13.
the **Lock** there are echoes of the descent to the Elysian Shade in the description of the punishments of the sylphs "stopped in vials" (TRL II 126) or "plunged in lakes of bitter washes" (TRL II 127). There is Umbriel's descent into the "gloomy Cave of Spleen" (TRL IV 16) where:

...living Teapots stand, one arm held out, One bent; the handle this, and that the spout: A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks; Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose Pie talks; Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works, And maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks. **(TRL IV 49-54)**

Low burlesque uses diminution, the appearance of ugly or homely images which are intended to diminish the dignity of a subject. For example, in **The Waste Land**, Eliot burlesques the Greek chorus by using Tiresias as narrator. This convention of Greek tragedy is given through the repetition of various phrases: "I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,/Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see" (TWL 218-219); "I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs/Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest" (TWL 228-229); "And I Tiresias have foresuffered all" (TWL 243). A pseudo-chorus, Tiresias is not an actor in the scene, just as the nymphs of **The Rape of the Lock** hover about their charges, watching and foreseeing rather than participating in the action. Pope generally derides the traditional form of the epic by using it for trivial affairs, thereby emphasizing in addition the triviality of the portrayed situation through the use of such elevated epic machinery.
Fastidiousness in diction is an aspect of satire which the seventeenth and eighteenth-century neo-classicists inherited from their classical models:

Pope's interest in the word, however, is something more pervasive - something related to the fact that he and his friends were among the last men to be trained thoroughly in an antique kind of respect for the word.¹⁹⁸

Although as a poet Pope was involved in the dedicated search for the creative word - the 'right word in the right place' - in the fourth canto of *The Dunciad* he illustrates the possibility of the destructive influence of words:

Give law to Words, or war with words alone,
Senates and Courts with Greek and Latin rule,
And turn the Council to a Grammar School! (D IV 178-180)

and

Spoiled his own language, and acquired no more;
All Classic learning lost on Classic ground;
And last turned Air, the Echo of a Sound! (D IV 320-322)

Rather than hiding the meaning of his words behind classic learning, Pope used the vernacular of his time - language which his reader would understand:

Pope's satires are conspicuous for the variety of materials which they assimilate and for their toughness in naming things by their ordinary names - a virtue which Matthew Arnold was to find in Homer.¹⁹⁹

Pope experiments with the classical material which he inherited and yet keeps his experiments well within the bounds of the imabic pentameter rhymed couplet form:

¹⁹⁸ Wimsatt, ed., p.xxv.
¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.xliv.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,

Her guardian SYLPH prolonged the balmy rest.

Although the two lines balance each other in syllabic length, by making the second line appear longer Pope emphasized the meaning of the word "prolonged". Although the couplets are always rhymed, Pope occasionally uses experimental 'imperfect' rhyme. He does not artificially force rhyme by using incongruent words to fit the rhyme. An example of this rhyming is found in the following couplet:

One Cell there is, concealed from vulgar eye,
The Cave of Poverty and Poetry. (D I 33-34)

Another innovative feature of Pope's style is his practice of not merely rhyming monosyllabic words with other monosyllabic words but enforcing the rhyme on occasion by rhyming polysyllabic words with monosyllabic words - "detains" rhymed with "chains" (TRL II 23-24) and "maids" rhymed with "masquerades" (TRL I 71-72).

Eliot has observed that "if an English poet is to learn how to use words in our time, he must devote close study to those who have used them best in their time; to those who, in their own day, have made the language new." Eliot's awareness of the history of language is evident everywhere in his poetry. The Waste Land is clearly representative of his "metrical virtuosity. Its basic measure is the heroic

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line, which it handles in almost every possible way.\textsuperscript{201}

\begin{verbatim}
  - - ' - ' - ' - - -'
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
  - - - - - - - - -'
Sweet Thames, run softly for I speak not loud or long.
\end{verbatim}

(TWL 183-184)

The first line is in iambic pentameter, but the second is a variation upon that meter; yet both lines have five strong and distinct beats, which give a feeling of homogeneity. Most of Eliot's heroic lines are decasyllabic, as are those of eighteenth-century neo-classicists such as Pope, exemplified in the following lines:

\begin{verbatim}
  - - - ' - - - - - -
But at my back from time to time I hear
  - - - - - - - - -
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
  - - - - - - - - -
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring. (TWL 196-199)
\end{verbatim}

Eliot's freedom in verse structure can be attributed to his views on metre:

Any line can be divided into feet and accents. The simpler metres are a repetition of one combination, perhaps a long and a short...five times repeated. There is however, no reason why, within a single line, there should be any repetition; why there should not be lines (as there are) divisible only into feet of different types.\textsuperscript{202}

Eliot's metre demonstrates the function of lines of various types of feet:

\begin{verbatim}
  - - - - - - - - -
1) To say: I am Lazarus come from the dead (LSP 93)
  - - - - - - - - -
2) Who are those hooded hordes swarming (TWL 369)
  - - - - - - - - -
3) He who was living is now dead (TWL 328)
\end{verbatim}


4) We who were living are now dying (TWL 329)

Line one is composed of an iamb, a trochee, two dactyls and an incomplete trochee. Line two is composed of a dactyl, a trochee, and a spondee with an added unaccented beat. Line three is composed of two dactyls and a spondee. Line four is composed of two dactyls and a spondee with an added unaccented syllable.

Thus Eliot follows his own principles, making every line vary in some way from the other lines. He felt that:

the most interesting verse which has yet been written in our language has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one. It is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony which is the very life of verse. 203

Much of The Waste Land is written in blank verse, Eliot having been influenced by Elizabethan dramatists and Shakespeare in particular. Yet Eliot often distorts even his blank verse, breaking from iambic rhythm, using from two to six, to ten feet per line. He observed that it is necessary for a poet to have a feeling for the syllables and rhythm. This must be present, unconsciously guiding the words he chooses to illustrate his theme. Although his verse is never formless, Eliot's lineal poetic structure varies from strict to irregular metre, as has been observed. He juxtaposes iambic pentameter

with three foot lines in *The Waste Land*, for example, in order to underline the uncertainty of the modern world: "The ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the 'freest verse'". 204

In order to preserve the feeling of the heroic couplet it was necessary for Eliot to use rhyme. But even in his use of rhyme, Eliot is innovative. The mock-epic effect of *Prufrock*, for example, is sustained by the opening rhymed couplet and interspersing the poem with unrhymed lines to underline the presence of the rhyme:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels

In *The Waste Land*, rhyme also plays an important role in stressing the burlesque nature of such scenes as the "typist home at teatime":

A small house agent's clerk with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.
The time is now propitious, as he guesses
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caressess
Which still are unreproved, if undesired

Alternate lines rhyme with each other while occasional unrhymed lines are interspersed to underline the rhyme and contrast the traditional neo-classical effects with modern innovations.

204 "Reflections on *Vers Libre*", *The New Statesman*, p. 518.
Eliot rarely uses a formal tone, and although The Waste Land speaks in "the system of stresses and pauses...that of poetry and not of prose", Eliot makes dramatic use of the colloquial language drawn from the vernacular of the ordinary twentieth century man or woman:

The poetry of a people takes its life from the people's speech and in turn gives life to it; and represents its highest point of consciousness, its greatest power and its most delicate sensibility.

Although it would be a mistake, he argued, "to assume that all poetry ought to be melodious", because some poetry "is meant to be sung; most poetry, in modern times, is meant to be spoken". However, Eliot stressed that no poetry, of course, "is ever exactly the same speech that the poet talks and hears". Instances of Eliot's conversational poetic language are found in all of his poetry, and the following is a most noticeable example:

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach? I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach. (LSP 121-122)

Two trivial and vain questions followed by an absurdly positive decision. Similarly, in the speech of the elevated lady of

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208. Ibid., p.23.
the "burnished throne" in "A Game of Chess", there is a feminine quality of nagging insistence in the language which Eliot has her use to her companion:

'My nerves are bad to-night. 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.' (TWL 111-114)

The language which the women in the pub scene use has the garrulous authenticity of real life, free flowing and punctuated only by the woman's habitual self-interruptions:

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said - I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself, ...
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 have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you. (TWL 139-146)

"The proper source of [the eighteenth-century poet's] diction was...the polite world of the court and city." 209

Yet while the language of Pope's poetry is most often 'proper', he too could use language with colloquial vividness, as exemplified in the opening of the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot:

P. Shut the door, good John! fatigued I said
Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead. (EDA 1-2)

Similarly, in The Rape of the Lock, Pope illustrates the use of common speech when he permits Sir Plume to let down his guard and break out with: "My Lord, my what the devil?" (TRL IV 126)

Nevertheless it was the formal aspect of eighteenth-century neo-classical verse which attracted both Pope and Eliot.

209 Marks, p.19.
It has been observed that:

the closed couplet, with its pointed rhyme, achieves a very complex internal economy: the couplet splits into lines, the lines often break into caesuras or internal rests. The possibility of balance and opposition of phrases may be underlined by resemblances of sound. 210

Eliot chose the couplet form for this economy in order to augment his modified blank verse, for he often breaks from the ten syllable lines of blank verse. He stated in his caution about free form in "The Music of Poetry", however, that "no verse is free for a man who wants to do a good job" and "only a bad poet could welcome free verse as a liberation from form." 211 The steady rhythm of the couplet in Prufrock and the attendant rhyme provide the reader with a feeling of the grandeur of traditional poetry which is often echoed in Eliot's verse. But this effect, like so many other traditional poetic techniques (the echoing of past literature, for example) was often used ironically in Eliot's early work. This exaggerated simplicity of the metre comments on the sinister and violent action in "Sweeney among the Nightingales", for instance, and adds, by its incongruity, a final grotesque note to the poem. There is an easy steadiness about the metre which at first lulls the reader, then shocks him into awareness of the real nature of the subject. 212

This deceptively lulling effect works excellently in the rough draft of "The Fire Sermon" in which Eliot pokes fun at

210 Brady and Price, eds., p.xv.
closet-verse by having Fresca write poetry:

She scribbles verse of such a gloomy tone
That cautious critics say, her style is quite her own.
Not quite an adult, and still less a child,
By fate misbred, by flattering friends beguiled,
Fresca's arrived (the Muses Nine declare)
To be a sort of can-can salonniere. 213

The rhythm and rhyme serve to lull the reader, but at the same time illustrate the sing-song verse that Fresca would have written. While the line - "Not quite an adult and still less a child" - describes the effect of Fresca's verse, it also doubles as an apt description of the young woman herself. This effect in which the verse echoes the sense of the poetry is achieved in the following couplet from Prufrock:

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo. (LSP 13-14)

Here, as elsewhere, the classical heroic couplet startles the reader with its contrast to the elegant and superficial patter of the women.

Eliot's and Pope's poetic practices testify repeatedly to their shared neo-classical outlook. Their homage to the uniqueness of the past and also their inspiration through imitation are an extension of tradition - what Robert Frost has called the "tribute of the current to the source". 214 At the same time, as has been argued throughout, both poets introduce successful innovations which relate them as distinctly to their own societies as to the past.

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II  SECONDARY SOURCES


