



Representation of cities as spaces through symbolist imagery in T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* and Arun Kolatkar's *Kala Ghoda*

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Abstract— *In twentieth-century's poetry, the city has become an important and complex theme because when writing about cities, poets tend to re-formulate and re-define their relation with literary and cultural traditions. The city poses a particular challenge for the modern poets because of their commitment to social and cultural traditions they feel that their role has been fused to simply responding to the social, moral, cultural and psychological transformations that the city symbolizes. Is it right to read a poet, or poetry, as an extension of a place? The answer is may or may not be. The question is to answer the unique narrative description of Bombay in Arun Kolatkar's Kala Ghoda and the city of London in T.S. Eliot's The Wasteland that defines the city using imagery and symbolism in the best manner. Walking through Bombay and reading Kala Ghoda Poems recreates a city that is constantly shifting and dancing around, full of noises and colours, all the while exposing those lives that are pushed out of an expanding concrete jungle, hidden under bright lights and tall towers—the triumphs of development. Eliot utilises the 'unreal city' London as the main setting for The Wasteland and the city comes to embody the title of the poem that id portrayed as ugly, cruel and grey, lacking any real human warmth or meaningful connections. The study will be centred on a reading and analysis of deconstructive poetry to show how postmodernism is hinted at while also demonstrating continuous sociocultural and socioreligious activities through the use of symbolism and imagery. The study will continue with chapters broken down into many aspects, including a comparative analysis of Eliot and Kolatkar's poetry, studying the issue of experimentalism and symbolism as well as imagery employed in Kolatkar's Kala Ghoda and Eliot's Wasteland. The subjectivities and experimentation in Indian English poetry and Western poetry can be understood and explored through a comparison of Arun Kolatkar and T.S. Eliot.*

Keywords— *modernist poetry, modernism, cosmopolitan, Indianness, Experimentalism, Symbolism*

I. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ELIOT AND KOLATKAR

Is there a right way to read poetry? I don't have the answer, but I believe that experiencing poetry physically allows me to see things that I have never noticed before. And this term 'experience' is the origin of my study as it is subjected to the relatable characteristics of our life. T.S. Eliot's 'Wasteland' talks about the mental tension of society and modern man and the brokenness of life through the city of London. Similarly, Kala Ghoda by Arun Kolatkar portrays

the life of migrant workers, unemployed labourers, hungry, homeless strays—victims of a glaringly uneven development. Living on the streets, outside of Bombay's high rises and social institutions is detrimental, today more than ever.

In dealing with the poetry of the city, I intend to establish a contextual reference framework, within which two poems 'The Wasteland' by T. S. Eliot and 'Kala Ghoda' by Arun Kolatkar can be compared and analysed in order to explore the Indian poetic attempt to integrate western modernism.

Two approaches were adopted in this study: the biographical and the new critical approaches. This paper will explore the two modernist poets in context which was marked by a smear of loneliness, alienation, frustration, and lack of inner peace, considerably turn to similar imaging of the "City" for their own use of symbolism. The modern city has given rise to new and unusual poetic images and experiences, and thus had their direct impact on the poetic form.

Eliot being the father of modern English poetry and Arun Kolatkar is at the heart of Modern Bombay. The study is committed to find the right critical tools to understand their poetry in terms of symbolism and imagery through cities as spaces. This study will highlight the way in which material poetry readings of literature can reveal new pathways of interpretation, a new methodology of understanding Indian and western modernism.

Through their poetry, Eliot and Kolatkar deals with many themes, obstacles, religious dogmas, blind faith, superstition and humanism in a modern and post- modern experimental manner that is prevalent in society and they also show how common man is easily deceived and affected by these.

So it is very much true that Eliot and kolatkar are the poet of common man and society. And, society is now turned into mix culture, tradition and thoughts that is well portrayed in their poetry through literary history. Along with the modern academic practices and studies a comparative study of two great poets from Indian and western will provide a broad aspect to literature and for the future researchers as well.

Indeed, along the English literary tradition, there are many references to the city, but the city in modern British and Indian poetry in particular has not been yet given sufficient critical attention. In this paper I seek to present a close reading of some poetic conceptions regarding the theme of the city, which have not been given adequate examination and reflection.

II. CENTRAL ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION

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ideas through different image ongoing study of English literature discusses in great detail how modern lifestyles affect the signs and symbols of poets. Almost every society in recorded history has practised poetry as an art form for thousands of years. People can better grasp the city as a whole and the value of developing their poetic visions and experiences by understanding the relationship between the city and the poet. The eminent modern English poets who are noted for the symbolic trend in their poetry are, as indicated, W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot. They are found to use this technique as an instrument to give out their study and review of the contemporary reality of modern society.

As a matter of fact, symbolism forms a necessary part of the intricacy as well as the rarity of modern English poetry. This is definitely instrumental to the distinction of the poetry of this age from its predecessors.

On the other hand, Indian poets such as Arun Kolatkar and Jayant Mahapatra, prominent poets of Indian literature use symbolism and imagery as a portrayal of city life and constructing the social and cultural phenomenon.

Bringing Kolatkar and Eliot together will expand and explore the literary canon in an aesthetic way and enhance the poetic study in relation to symbolist city imagery.

III. POETRY OF ELIOT AND KOLATKAR: THE VISION OF AN EXPERIMENTALIST

One of the most prominent characteristics of modern experimentalist poetry is its focus on the language itself. Poets such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound sought to challenge the traditional use of language in poetry, using complex, fragmented language that was often difficult to decipher. This style of poetry emphasized the importance of the sound and rhythm of words, as well as their meanings. This approach to language use in poetry can be seen in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," where the poem is constructed through a series of fragmented, disjointed images and references, reflecting the fractured nature of modern society.

Both Arun Kolatkar and T.S. Eliot are considered experimentalists in poetry, pushing the boundaries of traditional forms and techniques to express their unique visions of the world. In their respective works, "Kala Ghoda" and "The Waste Land," they employ a range of experimental techniques to convey their themes of urban decay, fragmentation, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world.

In "Kala Ghoda," Kolatkar experiments with form and language to reflect the chaotic and heterogeneous nature of Mumbai's urban landscape. The poem is composed of fragmented, disjointed images and vignettes, interspersed with lines of Marathi and Hindi, reflecting the polyglot nature of the city. The poem is structured around the central image of the Kala Ghoda statue, a prominent landmark in Mumbai, which serves as a metaphor for the city's complex history and cultural diversity.

Eliot's use of allusion and quotation in *Wasteland* from a range of literary and cultural sources, from Dante to Shakespeare to Hindu philosophy, also reflects the fragmented and hybrid nature of modern culture. The poem is also notable for its use of free verse and unconventional syntax, which contributes to its jarring and disorienting effect on the reader.

Both Kolatkar and Eliot's experimental approach to poetry reflects their broader concerns with the fragmented and contradictory nature of modern life. In "Kala Ghoda," Kolatkar depicts Mumbai as a city that is simultaneously vibrant and oppressive, full of life and energy, but also marked by poverty, violence, and the legacies of colonialism.

IV. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF KALA GHODA AND WASTELAND THROUGH CITY IMAGES OF MATERIALISM AND CAPITALISM

"Kala Ghoda" is a poem that uses city imagery to explore the themes of materialism and capitalism in Mumbai. Kolatkar's descriptions of the opulence of the rich and the poverty of the poor provide a stark contrast that highlights the disparities within the city. However, the poem also celebrates the diversity and resilience of the community, suggesting that there is more to the neighbourhood than just its materialistic culture.

Throughout the poem, the speaker makes several references to "*black money*" suggesting the prevalence of corruption and illicit activity in the neighbourhood. This could be seen as a commentary on the darker side of capitalism, where greed and a thirst for power can lead to immoral and illegal actions.

T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is a powerful indictment of the impact of materialism and capitalism on modern society. Through his use of vivid city imagery, Eliot presents a bleak portrait of the urban landscape as a soulless, mechanical place that has eroded traditional values and beliefs. However, the poem also offers a glimmer of hope, suggesting that there is a way out of this wasteland if we can find a way to reconnect with our spiritual selves.

While both poems critique the materialism and capitalism of modern society, they offer different perspectives on how to respond to these phenomena. In "Kala Ghoda," Kolatkar suggests that there is hope in the city's diverse and multicultural character. The use of Marathi and Hindi, as well as the depiction of different religious traditions, serves to emphasize the cultural richness of the city. In contrast, Eliot's portrayal of London in "The Waste Land" emphasizes the spiritual emptiness of modern society, with no clear path forward.

In conclusion, the use of city imagery to critique materialism and capitalism is a common thread in both "Kala Ghoda" and "The Waste Land." Both poems reflect on the dehumanizing effects of mass society and the fragmentation of traditional values and beliefs.

V. USE OF CITY IMAGERY TO DEPICT POST WAR PICTURE PORTRAYED IN WASTELAND AND POST COLONIALISM [PRE INDEPENDENCE-WAR] IN KALA GHODA

The use of city imagery in poetry is a powerful way to convey a sense of time and place, as well as to explore the social, political, and cultural forces at work within a

particular context. Eliot in "The Waste Land" and Kolatkar in "Kala Ghoda" used city imagery to depict the post-war and post-colonial landscapes of their respective settings.

In "The Waste Land," Eliot uses city imagery to depict a world in which spiritual and moral values have been lost or forgotten. The poem is set in London, a city that has been devastated by World War I, and the city serves as a symbol of the decay and fragmentation that characterizes modern life. Eliot presents a range of city images throughout the poem, from the crowds of people wandering aimlessly through the streets to the crumbling buildings and polluted air.

One of the most striking uses of city imagery in the poem is the description of London as an "Unreal City" in the opening lines of the first section. This phrase captures the sense of dislocation and alienation that characterizes modern urban life, suggesting that the city is a place where people have lost touch with reality.

Kolatkar uses city imagery to explore the contradictions and tensions of post-colonial India. He describes the streets of Mumbai as a kind of chaotic carnival, where ancient and modern cultures collide in a colourful and chaotic dance. At the same time, however, he also portrays the city as a place of violence and decay, with images of the "gutter of death" and the "streets of blood."

Both poems also highlight the complexity of urban spaces, which can be both beautiful and vibrant as well as dark and foreboding. They also suggest that even in the midst of decay and violence, there is still the potential for redemption and renewal.

VI. CONCLUSION: SUMMING UP THE POETIC VISION OF ELIOT AND KOLATKAR

T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" and Arun Kolatkar's "Kala Ghoda" are two significant poems that explore the modernist literary movement and urban spaces in the post-war period. Both works utilize city imagery to comment on the experience of modernity, experimentation, materialism, the post-war picture, and urban spaces.

City imagery plays a crucial role in both poems. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is a meditation on the post-war city, with its numerous voices, fragments, and wastelands. The poem depicts London as a city in decline, full of death, decay, and isolation. Eliot uses vivid imagery to describe the city's ruins, portraying London as a symbol of modernity's failure. The use of the different voices in the poem reflects the fragmentation of modern life, suggesting that it is difficult to establish any cohesive meaning in the modern world.

Kolatkhar's "Kala Ghoda," on the other hand, is a poem that celebrates the vibrancy and energy of Mumbai's urban space. The poem uses city imagery to describe the hustle and bustle of the city, with its myriad people and activities. Kolatkhar paints a vivid picture of the city's street vendors, flower sellers, and street performers, all of whom contribute to the city's character. The poem also addresses the darker side of urban life, as Kolatkhar depicts the dangers that lurk in the city's shadows. The poem's use of free verse and repetition creates a sense of rhythm, reflecting the city's constant movement and energy.

Both Eliot and Kolatkhar's poems are exemplars of modernist literature, utilizing literary experimentation and fragmentation to reflect the complexity and fragmentation of modern life. Eliot's use of multiple voices, allusions, and fragmentation challenges the traditional notions of poetry, creating a new way of looking at the world. Kolatkhar's use of free verse and incorporating overheard dialogue challenge the conventional poetic form and expand the possibilities of Indian English poetry.

The poems also address the theme of materialism in the modern world. Eliot's poem explores the theme of consumerism, where people are only interested in material possessions and pleasure. The poem suggests that this obsession with material goods has led to a spiritual emptiness and decay. Kolatkhar's poem, on the other hand, explores the theme of materialism in a more subtle manner. The poem depicts the vendors and sellers on the street, all trying to make a living. However, the poem suggests that there is more to life than just material possessions, as seen in the joy and energy of the street performers and musicians.

Finally, both Eliot and Kolatkhar address the post-war picture in their works. "The Waste Land" was written in the aftermath of World War I, and the poem reflects the psychological trauma and fragmentation that resulted from the war. Similarly, "Kala Ghoda" was written in the aftermath of India's independence, and the poem reflects the challenges and opportunities of the post-colonial era. Both works reflect the upheaval and uncertainty of the post-war period, as well as the complex and fragmented nature of modern life.

In conclusion, "The Waste Land" and "Kala Ghoda" are two essential works that explore the themes of modernism, experimentation, materialism, the post-war picture, and urban spaces. Both poems utilize city imagery to comment on the experience of modernity and the challenges and opportunities of the post-war period. The poems reflect the complexity and fragmentation of modern life, as well as the importance of looking at the world in a new way to understand its nuances.

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