



## Squalor And Sordid Ambiance In *Preludes*

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### Abstract:

This paper focuses light on the squalor and sordidness described by T.S.Eliot in his poem 'Preludes'. Many poets, dramatists and novelists have presented dull and dirty life in the city in their writing. William Blake had displayed poverty and ill treatment in his poem "London".

The poem opens with the introduction of the theme of oppression and suffering reflected in every face as the poet wanders through the streets of London. T.S.Eliot wrote this poem in four interrelated parts on different setting, places, times and situations so we can call it mood pieces which deal with sordid and dull life in the city. The poem is realistic and resembles another poem by Eliot entitled 'The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock', 'The Waste Land'etc.

**KEYWORDS:-**Squalor, sordidness, modern life, cinematic description of the city.

### INTRODUCTION :-

"It is misery, you know, unspeakable misery for the man who lives alone and who deserts sordid, casual affairs; not old enough to do without women, but not young enough to be able to go and look one without shame."-Luigi Pirandello.

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Luigi Pirandello states the condition of modern man in the world. He deftly writes about miserable condition of people who live in sordid situation. In the modern life, people use to live alone, lonely and dirty by physical and spiritual. T.S.Eliot is a modern poet, critic and dramatist born in St. Louis, in 1888. He was one the most distinguished poets and critics of the second quarter of the twentieth century. His early poems depict the urban landscape expresses disgust with the rootlessness of modern life. Considered to be a representative modern poem, *The Waste Land* (1922), a long poem in the five parts, is complex and reveals the impotence and barrenness of the modern life devoid of belief.

T.S.Eliot was a very deft poet who wrote it in a four interrelated poems. These poems are descriptive and evocative in nature. They describe specific scenes of modern city life. They are called town poems because they evoke sad, silent, unhappy moods that show the poet's views regarding the life of poor people in the big city. In the first part of 'Prelude', the poet describes a winter evening which is wet and dirty. The air is full of an unpleasant smell of slices of meat and fish. To display such situation I have cited following lines from the poem.

“The winter evening settles down  
With smell of steaks in passageways.  
Six o'clock.”

(P.112)

The poet describes the dark and smoky evening is like a burnt –out end of a cigarette which reminds us T.S.Eliot's “Four Quarters”.

“The burnt-out ends of smoky days.”

(P.112)

Above line deals with the dirty, dull and squalid evening in an anonymous city. It is a dull winter evening. The air is filled with sordid gases of meat and fish. The rain water drives dry leaves which wrap the feet of the walkers. The showers are arresting against the window-screens and chimney pots. At the corner of the street, a lonely cab-horse is beating the ground with his feet which shows nothingness or barrenness in the modern world. The modern man is always unhappy without an action. He has become restless because of the wind and showers of rain. Soon street-lamps are lighted. It shows lonely and ill life of modern man.

In the second 'Prelude' the poet describes a morning scene which is dull, stale and unpleasant. Here I quote some lines from poem as follows.

“The morning comes to consciousness  
Of faint stale smells of beer  
From the sawdust-trampled street  
With all its muddy feet that press  
To early coffee-stands.”

(P.112)

The above lines describes that the air is filled with smells of beer. The streets are covered

with saw-dust. They are trodden by the muddy feet of the people going towards the coffee stalls. The poet very deftly describes many other useless activities of the modern city people are going on. Their daily routine starts with dreadful activity. People are raising dingy shades of their furnished houses. The underlined lines present squalor, dirtiness, filthiness etc of modern city life.

“You tossed a blanket from the bed,  
You lay upon your back, and waited;  
You dozed, and watched the night revealing  
The thousand sordid images”

(P.113)

I quote some lines from third part of the poem which presents a terrible, filthy scene of the morning .The woman is one of the slum dwellers does not want to get up. She tossed her blanket from the bed. She lies still on her back and dozes. She reminds her dirty experience of previous night which makes her inner life. Then the poet describes the trampled street outside and the woman sitting on the edge of her bed curls the paper from her hairs. The hands of the woman are too dirty to display th

The last part of the poem also presents the sordid picture of evening which is dull and tedious. I quote some lines here.

“His soul stretched tight across the skies  
That fade behind a city block”

(P.113)

The above lines depict that the onlooker of the scene is affected by the unpleasant scene. Many people have rushed in the street. The street is crushed. There is a sharp depiction of smoking tobacco that spreads dirt, sordidness and dullness. At the end the poet describes the day's traffic, the sordid area, and his soul is filled with pity for some sufferer.

At the end I think there is no possibility of anything good in this dirty area. The poem begins with an evening and ends with an evening. This shows circular mode of dirty and unpleasant scenes of day and night will continue for- ever. The poet reminds us many slum –dwellers areas in the world. Such as this poem is about Boston city and we get Dharavi slum-area in Mumbai which is full of dirt, filthy, sordid and squalor scenes, time and places.

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