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**THE WASTE LAND – A HIGHER
AUTHORITY THAN TERRESTRIAL
IS CALLED UPON**

Mentor:
dr. Victor Kennedy, izr. prof.

Kandidat:
Tomo Kadilnik

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The Sun
Rain
Trees
Thank you

Abstract

The Waste Land shows clearly the decay of modern society and alludes to religion as a possible solution. The aim of the first part of this essay is to determine general problems of society that the poet is concerned with. The discussion continues with an analysis of Eliot's poetic language in the poem in order to perceive the real nature of the people of the waste land. To attain this objective, some of the images, symbols, metaphors, and metamorphoses in the poem are examined closely. The solution lies somewhere outside the inflationary ego, but an individual must develop it him- or herself. The method of how something is told is important.

Key words: T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, symbol, image, metamorphosis, moral values, religion.

Povzetek

The Waste Land (*Pusta zemlja*) jasno kaže razkroj moderne družbe in namiguje na religijo kot možno rešitev. Cilj prvega dela eseja je ugotoviti splošne probleme družbe s katerimi ukvarja pesnik. Diskusija se nadaljuje z analizo Eliotovega poetičnega jezika v pesmi z namenom, da zazna resnično naravo ljudi puste zemlje. V okviru tega so nekatere slike, simboli, metafore in metamorfoze natančneje analizirani. Rešitev leži nekje zunaj inflatornega jaza, posameznik pa jo mora sam razviti. Pomembna je metoda kako nekaj povedati.

Ključne besede: T. S. Eliot, *Pusta zemlja*, simbol, slika, metamorfoza, moralne vrednote, religija.

The Waste Land – A Higher Authority Than Terrestrial Is Called Upon

Through the poetic language of *The Waste Land* I would like to discuss the existence of Eliot's strong idea, that humans, if they are humans at all, need a basis in the self. This basis has to be irrational, built in the process of development of each individual, and a firm pillar for decisions between Good and Evil.

The Waste Land is a sequence of images of various life situations of more or less unknown characters for an average reader, or of everyday man, that may work like a film. With the rhythm, juxtaposition of the images, carefully prepared ironic situations, the symbolic values included, and depiction of tiny things of seemingly everyday life, the poet tries to evoke the impression what sort of the people the characters really are. The reader is like a psychologist involved in a conversation with his patients about daily routines and will, shortly after that, be able to tell how they react at crucial moments. As T. S. Pierce said, "... we need to realise that all wars are one war, all battles one battle, all journeys one journey, all rivers one river, all rooms one room, indeed ultimately all people one person ..." (T. S. Pierce 95), the reader-psychologist needs to realize what type of a person is a woman who drank coffee and talked for an hour, who is not Russian (11-12), what kind of a city is under a brown fog (61), who is the hyacinth girl (36), why Phlebas forgot the cry of gulls (312-313). The poet is by no means telling directly, but that means he does not deploy big events. He

uses small everyday unimportant events, or, rather, he diminishes big events in persons' lives as in the conversation concerning the husband's demobilization, where new teeth, and the woman's appearance, are more important than magic and all inclusive love, for example (139-166). There springs an analogical comparison between new teeth – love and rhymed verse – free verse.

The theme is about a land that is desolate, but the reason is not barren stone where no plant can grow; it is in the type of the people who inhabit the land. The images synthesize into a general image of the world, though there may be a number of others, and no two of them identical, one is presented in the next few pages.

All societies, from historical to contemporary, have been faced with the problem of how to assure continuity of their moral values in an ever-changing world. The upbringing of children is an activity with which the whole structure of today's human society is concerned. Success in it seems to be, especially for parents, following their values of the descendants. At what age is my son or daughter ready to act independently without parental warning in a certain situation that is unpredictable and may lead to a diversion from the direction? This question seems to be one of the central ones to the problems of the future and of present. Then what leads a grown-up person to function within limitations that are denoted with a word 'normal'? Is it something in us, outside us, in our environment, or is there a determiner beyond everything that is out of our dominion? Maybe the statement is suitable that if any action is repeated long

enough by a numerous enough group of people it becomes normal, correct, truth.

The Great War brought, for the majority of onlookers, a great discontinuity. Though it is hard to catch the real 'Zeitgeist', it appeared as a break of evolutionist understanding of development as linear, neglecting regression. Humanity was in question for everyone having in mind, for example, images of Verdun. Though the causal-consecutive force was understood as a motive in a positivistic approach, it may have never been a decisive one. Saturation with something supernatural, beyond our senses, which common people have never really understood, and scholars have sought to understand, offers to be a rather imaginary but the closest description of that that controls or determines human activities.

At Harvard Eliot was influenced by the anti-Romanticism of Irwin Babbitt, philosophical and critical interests of George Santayana, by enthusiasm that prevailed in certain Harvard circles for Elizabethan and Jacobean literature, by the Italian Renaissance, and Indian mystical philosophy. He also worked intensively on the English idealist philosopher F. H. Bradley¹. Eliot stated that our civilization comprehends a great variety and complexity and this variety and complexity playing upon sensibility, must produce various and complex results; and that a poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into meaning. Finally, his real novelty was his deliberate elimination of all merely

¹ His Harvard dissertation. Bradley put emphasis on the private nature of individual experience.

connective transitional passages and his building up of the total pattern of meaning through the immediate juxtaposition of images without overt explanation of what they are doing together, with his use of oblique references to other works of literature (*Norton Anthology* 2136-2140).

In 1927 Eliot became a British citizen and was confirmed in the Church of England (Pearce 16). He made clear his belief in the importance of religion with his position explained in 1939 with *The Idea of Christian society* (Pearce 25). He suggests that the idea of Christian society is something that demands more intellectual respect. He is interested, most of all, in how to clear up the dissimilarity of the ideal of Christian society to the one we live in now. He also thinks that our contempt towards totalitarianism is soaked with a great measure of admiration of its effectiveness (Eliot, *Kršćanstvo in kultura* 10).

Eliot also points out the emptiness of the expressions *liberalism* and *democracy* England and America identify with. The latter is very popular; the only trouble is that the defenders of totalitarianism would argue convincingly by saying that England and America have nothing else but financial oligarchy. Eliot attributes artificial, mechanized, brutal control to liberalism, which destroys the traditional social practices of a nation by ruining the collective consciousness, and replacing upbringing with education – the only opportunity that remains is a hopeless anomy (Eliot, *Kršćanstvo in kultura* 16). For that reason, for Eliot, there is nothing left to England and America, but democracy that has a connotation of freedom. The trouble is that totalitarian systems, however, may identify with democracy and freedom as well. He sees 'totalitarian' and

'democratic' systems as perfectly equal in their fundamental orientation toward materialism, tendency of which is a creation of a crowd of men and women, alienated from religion, susceptible for mass suggestions – the mob (Eliot, *Kršćanstvo in kultura* 17-21). This is a type of people who live in his literary works, and although, as for his essay, he tries to observe problems from the point of view of a sociologist, he may be called a universal apologist of Christianity. When treating Eliot's writing, his great capacity for logical conclusions should be taken into consideration as well. He defines, for example, a religious standpoint as one from which we set the question if the principles of one religion are right or wrong. From this, he says, though we are atheists, we stand on the religious standpoint.

The question of an alternative for the negative condition of society is highly relevant for analysing Eliot's literary work. He sees a positive Christian society as the only solution to sanity's problems, and distinguishes between three working definitions as elements of that society: *Christian state*, *Christian society*, and *society of Christians*. For a Christian state, he thinks of a Christian society from the viewpoint of legislation, public administration, tradition of law. This however functions within the scope of possible relations between the Church and the state. Within a Christian society, religion must be deep-rooted. Religion should be for the majority of the people a matter of practice and a habitual behaviour; first of all, it should be integrated into their social lives – a traditional way of life would not be enforced by law. A much smaller number would consist of a society of Christians. They would be expected to live a

conscious Christian life – they would be consciously and deliberately acting Christians, especially those who exceed in an intellectual and spiritual sense. This would be comprised of clergy as well as laymen of higher spiritual or intellectual gifts (Eliot, *Kršćanstvo in kultura* 25-40).

Another important question Eliot is concerned with is the successful transmission of the culture. He introduces the concept of *class* and *elite* for their functions in this process. He is of the opinion that special elite, whose members are mainly from the dominant class, and who are the predominant receivers of works, thoughts and art, represents the centre of the culture. Authors, however, come from different classes. Individuals from the dominant class, who compose the core of the culture, however, should not be cut off from this class. Their function in relation to authors is to transmit the culture they have inherited, their function in the relation to the class, however, is to keep it from ossification. The function of the class as a whole is to preserve and give standards of behaviour (Eliot, *Kršćanstvo in kultura* 125-127).

On one hand, Eliot emphasises a deficit of moral norms with godless societies, which should integrate the societies instead of regulating everyday life in a mechanistic way, and on the other, he is concerned with the transmission of culture.

Let us discuss the fact that Eliot made use of extraordinarily numerous literary works, stories, and myths in *The Waste Land*. It seems that either the poem was created for elite, who were educated and ready to take time for digging deeper, or he intended to create a universal message for all segments

of society. The first alternative leads our thoughts to the idea that only the elite understood what was going on and could change something. In Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, for example, the elite searched for the essence of life and for their inspiration among common, rural people, and lived of their mythical beliefs and unreasonable behaviour. So the elite fulfilled their lives with what they were not able to understand.

The second alternative is that T.S. Eliot intended to create a universal message open to everyone based on some historical facts and on the necessity he found how a poet must write. A spiritual dryness after the theories did not pass the test, and a collapse of the material world may have prompted him to think of the needs of the modern man, of how communication functions. He may have recognized the symbolic bases of communication, and that the symbols are rarely products of personal research, that they are formed during interactions, and handed over to generations, and that images help with forming symbols and consequently the meaning. His clear images in *The Waste Land* may create a mood without a reader's knowing most of the stories from the works that stand behind.

Let us now proceed to a more detailed analysis of the poem. The quotation that prefaces the poem is from the *Satyricon* of Petronius (1st century A. D.). The English translation goes: "For once I myself saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae hanging in the cage, and when the boys said to her: '*Sibyl, what do you want?*' she replied, '*I want to die.*'" (Eliot, *The Waste Land*; translated by the editors). Sibyls were women living in isolated places and were capable of

giving prophetic utterances. The story begins when the Cumaean Sibyl is asked by Aeneas to guide him to his dead father across the water of Avernus. She is willing to take him to the shades of his father by admitting that the real virtue is capable of every path. She shows him a special tree where he can get a golden bough, a ticket for the boatman. On their way back the Sibyl discloses her failure and consequently her sad destiny. Apollo wanted her love and in return offered her presents. The Sibyl asked for life for as many years as grains of sand in her handful. Unfortunately, she forgot to ask for perpetual youth as well, and after she did not fulfil her promise and stayed unmarried, there was no chance for another favour, so she shrank into withered old body (Ovid 85-86). The Sibyl's words in Golding's translation of Ovid go:

The day will come that length of time shall make my body small,
And little of my withered limbs shall live or not at all.

So sore I shall be altered. And then shall no man's eye
Discerne mee. Only by my voice I shall be known. For why
The fates shall leave mee still my voice for folk to know mee by.
(http#1).

There are two things that seem important for our purpose. One is that the Sibyl asked for immortality, which is normally within the dominion of gods, and did not keep her promise. Failing to keep the promise or not, she entered the forbidden sphere and she, however, must have done something wrong in her human selfishness. The other is the Sibyl's unbearable present state; she has lost her youth, and she wants to die, but she has to live.

One possible interpretation of the Sibyl's words is that she is saying what the people of the waste land are saying. Their lives, as we will see, are

purposeless, and therefore unbearable at the same time, they want to die from the fatigue of every day. Cleanth Brooks (130) suggests another interpretation. The Sibyl may be saying what the speaker of *Journey of the Magi* seems to distinguish, and it is a leap ahead of the people of the waste land:

This: were we led all that way for
 Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
 We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
 But had thought they were different; this Birth was
 Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
 We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
 But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
 With an alien people clutching their gods.
 I should be glad of another death.
 (Eliot, *Journey of the Magi*; lines: 35-43).

In the last part of the poem the speaker firmly clears up the distinction between two points in a person's life, Birth and Death, which may be the same. The reiteration of consonant sounds echoes in the ears and suggests that there are two deaths, one, birth resembles it, and the other, for those people, who have three trees in mind – Jesus' crucifixion, which resembles birth. The latter is that the speaker is glad of, and also the Sibyl may wish it.

A discourse of the romantic idea and French poet Baudelaire will take us to the same distinction. There is: "... something more: the reaching out towards something which cannot be had *in*, but which may be had partly *through*, personal relations" (Eliot, *Baudelaire* 428). Eliot continues with the problem:

Indeed in much romantic poetry the sadness is due to the exploitation of the fact that no human relations are adequate to human desires, but also to the disbelief in any further object of human desires than that which, being human, fails to satisfy them. One of the unhappy necessities of

human existence is that we have to 'find things out for ourselves'(Eliot, *Baudelaire* 428).

Further on, Eliot mentions Baudelaire's aphorism: "... *la volupté unique et suprême de l'amour gît dans la certitude de faire le mal*" (Eliot, *Baudelaire* 428), and its meaning in English would be: "... Voluptuousness highest and unique of love is in certitude of evil done" (my translation). From this Eliot recognizes that Baudelaire has perceived "... that what distinguishes the relations of man and woman from the copulation of beasts is knowledge of Good and Evil ..." (Eliot, *Baudelaire* 428-429). Eliot proceeds with his attitudes "... the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the natural, 'life-giving', cheery automatism of the modern world (Eliot, *Baudelaire* 429), and concludes them with a rather testamentary, and logical explanation, considered by the majority of scholars as a key one:

So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least we exist. It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation. The worst that can be said of most of our malfactors, from statesmen to thieves, is that they are not men enough to be damned (Eliot, *Baudelaire* 429).

The inhabitants of the waste land, presented in the first part of the poem, are humans, and, "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 100), they do such unsubstantial things.

The first picture is about spring, a season of a new growth that is astonishingly unpleasant to sterile lilacs, like the people of the land, who are capable of sexual copulation like beasts. Although lilacs may evoke unspoiled

virginity, especially their white colour, they, with their intense sensuousness, as well as hyacinths in another picture, stand out, and seem to be part of a carefully prepared irony. We would expect soft grassy leaves, playful creeks, but not with Eliot. It is hard to begin a new life, the people, we, the poet would rather stay under cover of the blanket after a night of partying till late morning, than get up. Days, seasons, years, and human lives are all cycles that have their beginning and end.

Then comes a cut and the next picture, "... a sort of a reverie on the part of the protagonist ..." (Brooks, 130). The passage is so soft that we may connect it with the previous one as part of the same story. Marie is telling her memories from the time she spent by Hofgarten: walks, coffee, talks, easy life of the financially secure people, and not frightened. Possibly she has to explain that she is German. She then goes back in her memories to her childhood, where she was frightened. She remembers how free she felt there that it brings us to doubt about her easiness at present, especially for such a strong symbol of divine capacity as a *mountain*. Afterwards she tells us that she reads much of the night, so she cannot sleep, "... and go south in the winter" (18), so she is either so well off or, better, she does exactly opposite from usual. Therefore her real uneasiness and fear are present states, after they descended the mountain.

Then comes the narrator's question: "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" (19-20). It certainly addresses a higher authority than man's. The reason why is simple. Man has exhausted all his cleverness. The answer comes from the religious scriptures.

The tone of the words addressed, the question in this case, normally depend on the rank of the addressee. Although it may be assumed that the authority has set the question Himself to introduce his speech, there may be another view that recalls the Grail problem and the task of the hero (Weston 11-22), the questing knight. We see that his task is to ask the right question, which has a symbolic value, and means that he has to behave heroically, to resist the temptations on his way. In this view the narrator may be the questing knight, in other words, an abstract state of moral values of the people inhabiting the waste land.

The question discussed above is followed by the answer of the authority that begins with line 20 and ends in line 30. Eliot's note tells us that "Son of man," (line 20) refers to God's words to Ezekiel, where they emphasize the smallness and fragility of man:

AND he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, in I will speak unto thee.

2. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

3. And he said unto me, Son of man, I sent thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day (Ezekiel 2.1-3).

Here God says that the people, the children of Israel, "have transgressed" against Him. They left Him and went their own way. The lines in the poem that follow express, in the metaphor "... you know only / a heap of broken images ..." (21-22), how fragile the people of the waste land are. All the images of the poem are the pictures of man's spiritual state, and have nothing to do with real deserts. The metaphors "... where the sun beats, / And the dead tree gives no

shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water” (22-24) are not descriptions of the weather conditions in the waste land; they are images of the spiritual dryness of the people. Whatever they do, any material belongings they have, or, however they satisfy their senses, everything is in vain, for a dry stone gives no water. The lines may suggest the field of existence where there is nothing and that the essence of life, the Holy Grail, must be sought elsewhere. The images mentioned above are, according to Eliot’s note, a part of the preacher’s *Counsel to the youth*:

1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years drew nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.
2. While the sun or the light, or the moon or the stars, be not darkened, not the clouds return after the rain:
3. In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,
4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;
5. Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the trees:
6. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern.
7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.
8. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.
(Ecclesiastes 12.1-8).

A parable describes a house that is slowly emptying and closing to illustrate a man in his old age and the coming of death. It describes a life that is like death. The preacher is a simple man and does not have in mind Resurrection and a

belief in life after death, but simply what he says; therefore death is an unfruitful one.

Line 25 carries a symbol of Holy Church in *red rock* and, according to Eliot's note, refers to Isaiah's vision in *The blessing of the coming kingdom*:

1. BEHOLD, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princess shall rule in judgement.
 2. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
 3. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.
- (Isaiah 32.1-3).

The prophet, a herald of the tragedy, here becomes a herald of salvation. He prophesies the coming of the Holy Kingdom, where all is to be different. The lines in the poem (25-29) reflect the same consolation that invites the people of the waste land to join the Kingdom and leave their restless state. Line 30, however, unfolds the other death, like life in the waste land. "... fear in a handful of dust." recalls the horrible Sibyl's destiny, and is also a biblical symbol for what remains when the Holy Spirit leaves a man's body. At the same time it may be an introduction to the image (31-34) from Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, as Eliot's note unfolds.

The translation of Wagner's words is: "Fresh blows the wind to the homeland; my Irish child, where are you waiting?" (*Norton Anthology* 2148) and is a part of the song from Act I. It is sung "... by a young sailor aboard the ship which is bringing Isolde to Cornwall" (Brooks 132). Brooks suggests the song is an image of a happy and naïve love and that the image of a Hyacinth garden

that follows recalls the protagonist's experience of love. Naivety and youthfulness shine from metaphors like "Frish wecht der Wind" (31), "hair wet", "the Hyacinth garden", and, from the reign of consciousness, which is the reign of senses:

– Yet we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
Your arms full and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, silence (37-41).

The lines begin with "Speak", "Living", "Looking"; the protagonist's eyes may fail to see something beyond, that which is under the surface.

The line that follows the image of the Hyacinth garden: "Oed' und leer das Meer." (42) is from Act III of the opera. In English it means: "Empty and wide the sea" (Brooks 133). It is the reply of the watcher who reports to deadly wounded Tristan that he cannot see Isolde's ship. Isolde is the only one who can symbolically heal his wounds. If she comes, he will stay alive in everlasting passion, which is like death; if she does not, they will both die, as Isolde will follow him and they will join posthumously. Tristan, however, is asking for her. This shows that he is not prepared to die and is therefore in the same maze like the people of the waste land. In the poem the two images are set in juxtaposition, where one is from the youth and another from the mature age. The sea is empty in the latter. Although there is nothing to live for, Tristan cannot die willingly, the poet may want to say, and this is horrible.

Both images, the one from the opera, and the protagonist's memories, have something in common and differ in the fact that *Tristan and Isolde* is a well-

known myth and therefore has a higher rank than the protagonist's recollections.

The mythical dimensions of *Tristan and Isolde* are of great significance for the whole poem. They draw a line of the beginning of human civilisation and at the same time of the birth of each individual. Both of the future lovers live within existing rules until they accidentally drink a beverage that makes them passionately fall in love. Nothing could change the course of events dramatically if it were not a forbidden love, a passion that chases them by causing pain and restlessness. Their death seems to be the best solution to bring them peace and reunite them forever.

Adam and Eve's story contains the same relations. They are in Eden and have to obey the rules, not to eat from the tree of revelation. As soon as they break the prohibition and take the apple from the tree, they are aware of their nakedness, and are consequently expelled from Eden. In other words, they became humans and are doomed to everlasting grief.

Edward F. Edinger continued Carl Gustav Jung's work. Their analysis concerns relations between the myths and corresponds to the relations in *The Waste Land*. Moreover, the poem could be seen on two levels, on the level of the protagonist's ontogenesis that is present in the development of the personae, and, on the level of phylogenesis of the human race that has stuck somewhere, and a way out has to be found.

Jung's theory divides the psyche into three parts. The first part is the ego, which Jung identifies with the conscious mind. The personal unconscious is closely related and includes anything that is not presently conscious or is

suppressed to unconsciousness. The part, unique to Jung's theory, is the collective unconscious. It is an accumulation, a heritage, of our species, and we are all born with, while the formation of the ego begins with first individual's acts. The contents of the collective unconscious are called archetypes. They are unlearned tendency to experience things in a certain way. The most important of all archetypes is the self and is the ultimate unity of the personality. The goal of life is to realize the self by achieving the transcendence of all opposites present in any thing. Jung and Edinger explained possible 'traps' on individual's way of self-realization. One of them is the state of inflation, which is identification of the ego with the self. Here a small ego arrogates the qualities of something much bigger in godlike, proud, and narcissistic behaviour. This type of person corresponds to those who, according to Eliot, are not enough men to be damned. (Edinger 11-17.)

The other extreme is a well-individualized person, whose ego and self do not overlap, but in whom there exists a perfect awareness of the connection between his or her ego and self. It can be ideally achieved with individual's death.

In the process of development towards self-realization, the spiritual growth consists of a range of either inflationary or heroic deeds, which cause the refusal of the surroundings, which is followed by alienation, regret, and renewal. If the linkage between the ego and the self is torn apart, a feeling of emptiness, despair, or of unimportance appears. Edinger provides a few examples (Edinger 62-71) of alienation in biblical stories, among which are *Adam and Eve*, and

Cain and Abel. A good example is also seen in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, which begins with a state of alienation 'in the dark forest close to Gate of Hell':

Half way along the road we have to go,
I found myself obscured in a great forest,
Bewildered, and I knew I had lost the way.

It is hard to say just what the forest was like,
How wild and rough it was, how overpowering;
Even to remember it makes me afraid.

So bitter it is, death itself is hardly more so;
(Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, Hell 1, 1-7).

Edinger concludes with the observation that modern examples of alienation are so many that our age could be easily named the age of alienation. He cites two excerpts from *The Waste Land* (19-24, 331-344). His opinion is that the poem expresses:

... individual and collective alienation that is characteristic of our time. 'A heap of broken images' refers to the traditional religious symbols that have, for many people, lost their meanings. We live in a desert and are no longer able to find the source of water that maintains life (Edinger 71; my translation).

In the next passage (43-55) a fortune-teller named Madame Sosotris is spreading Tarot cards to tell the future through divination. She says that her interlocutor's card is *the drowned Phoenician Sailor*. Although Eliot, in his note to the poem, admits that he uses the cards to suit his own convenience, a close examination of the Tarot pack shows that the nature of the Phoenician Sailor, who is the traveller in the poem, resembles the card named *The Fool*. It is a member of the Major Arcana – 22 cards, as are the other cards mentioned in

the poem. He is commonly depicted as a male, but he is androgynous, containing elements of both sexes. He is a representation of a child or the human psyche, and wisdom and playfulness at the same time (Summers 63-64). The other cards of the Major Arkana will lead and help him on his way. He appears as Mr. Eugenides in line 210 and the drowned Phlebas in *Death by Water*. His guides on his way are *Belladonna*, *the man with three staves*, *the Wheel*, *the blank card*, and *the Hanged Man*. "... Belladonna, the lady of the Rocks" (49) corresponds to *The Priestess* in Tarot and is symbolized by the moon and water. As she is a virgin, she is a potential. "She symbolizes the infinite potential of the unconscious, which only waits to be fertilised by the consciousness for it to spring into action" (Summers 66). Eliot associates *the man with three staves* arbitrarily with the Fisher King. He corresponds to *The Emperor* in Tarot, who represents human consciousness. While *The Empress* is nature, *The Emperor* is society "... which imposes its own brand of order on nature" (Summers 69). The *Wheel* corresponds to the card *Fortune* in Tarot. It represents equality and a cyclic nature of progress, where a figure at the top is to fall and the one at the bottom is to rise. *The one-eyed merchant* is Mr. Eugenides, *The Fool*, who is commonly depicted in profile, so we cannot see his second eye. He is of crooked nature and has rather profit than moral values in his mind. *The blank card*, line 52, corresponds to *The Hermit* in Tarot, who is a robed man holding a burning lamp and a burden on his back, where the former is a symbol of introverted meditative nature, while the latter represents the burden of his ego. *The Hanged Man* has the same name in Tarot, and is,

with his head upside-down, a symbol of self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ's hanging on the cross, whom Madame Sosotris does not find.

Jessy L. Weston, concerned with the origin of symbols in medieval romances, says that Tarot cards are divided into four suits, which correspond with those of ordinary cards:

Cup (Chalice, or Goblet) – Hearts.
 Lance (Wand, or Sceptre) – Diamonds.
 Sword – Spades.
 Dish (Circles, or Pentangles, the form varies) – Clubs.
 (Weston 73-74).

She adds that today the Tarot has fallen into disrepute and is used for divination (Weston 74) as our faith has fallen into disrepute or has become instrumental and has lost its primary roots – a connection with the collective unconscious. Miss Weston, who has discussed a number of rituals of the past and present appearances, suggests that

... that while Lance and Cup, in their associated form, are primarily symbols of Human Life energy, in conjunction with others they formed a group of 'Fertility' symbols, connected with a very ancient ritual, of which fragmentary survivals alone have been preserved to us (Weston 76).

In the last passage of *The Burial of the Dead*, which stretches from line 60 to line 76, we encounter the people of one of the cities in the waste land. It is not just accidentally London, or more precisely its financial district. London Bridge, King William Street, and Saint Mary Woolnoth are situated in that district. Stetson is an average businessman, probably wearing a black suit, a white shirt, and a tie, spending his lunch break in a restaurant with the special offer of

the day. Eliot used, in my opinion, a couple of clumsy rhymes: *so many – so many, feet – Street, men – again*, to emphasise the superficiality of their nature; however, the most profound passage is the message in the lines where Baudelaire's, Dante's and Webster's works are referred to. The translation of Baudelaire's lines, "Swarming city, city full of dreams, / Where the specter in broad daylight accosts the passerby" (*Norton Anthology* 2149) paints a picture of the Unreal City. Dante's lines, with which Virgil explains to Dante who is in the Vestibule of Hell: "Those who have lost the benefit of the intellect." (*Inferno* 3.18), "There were sighings and complaints and howlings," (*Inferno* 3.22)², "That is a manner of existence / Endured by the sad souls of those who lived / Without occasion for infamy or praise." (*Inferno* 3.34-36), "They are even the hope of death; / Their blind existence is of such objection / That they are envious of every other fate." (*Inferno* 3.46-48), "So many that I never should have thought / Death had been able to undo so many." (*Inferno* 3.56-57). In line 65, Canto 4 is referred to, where live those who "They have committed no sin, and if they have merits, / That is not enough, because they are not baptised, / Which all must be, to enter the faith which is yours" (*Inferno* 4.34-36). We see that it is a word of indecisive people, with secular attitudes, and, those, although virtuous, who lived before the Christian era.

The passage continues tensely with "... the Dog ..." (78). Commonly man's best friend is now turned into his foe. The states like *boredom, silence, horror, and hard to live* are attributed to the people of the waste land as inherent to any

² I am citing Charles H. Sisson's translation of *The Divine Comedy* from 1980, therefore unfortunately not the edition Eliot used.

of their actions. “That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / Has it begun to sprout?” (71-72) carries a thought of fertility god rituals, but the people no longer practise them, they are of immemorial antiquity. The people who inhabit the waste land sow dead seeds – the culture, even a faithless one, has lost its ability to reproduce.

The second part of the poem, *A Game of Chess*, deals with seduction of human senses. “The title suggests two plays of Thomas Middleton ... *A game at Chess ... Women Beware Women*, which has a scene in which mother-in-law is distracted by a game of chess while her daughter-in-law is seduced ...” (*Norton Anthology* 2150). Lines from 77 to 90 are a distortion of Enobarbus’s description of Cleopatra to Mæcenus in Act 2.2 in *Anthony and Cleopatra*. There is a fundamental difference in the nature of sensuousness between Cleopatra and the seduction in *A Game of Chess*. As Cleanth Brooks points out in *Cleopatra*,

Mæcenus: Now Antony must leave her utterly.

Enobarbus: Never he will not:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

Her infinite variety: other women cloy

The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry,

Where most she satisfies (Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra* 237-242),

there is a reason for the poet’s having compared the lady to the Egyptian queen. Brooks finds in the words above “...perhaps the extreme exponent of love for love’s sake ...” (Brooks 138). “She throws away an empire for love” (Brooks 138). But how is the seduction carried out at the game of chess? “‘A Game of Chess’ *has been staled*” (Brooks 138). There is not just no love, but also no willingness at all; there are strict rules only that determine the game like

the rules that determine the actions of the people of the waste land. Moreover, listening to the gramophone and maximizing profit, or whatever it be, everything in accordance with positive law, are not real actions at all. Cleanth Brooks finds John Crowe Ransom's explanation in *God Without Thunder* very clear:

Love is the aesthetic of [religion]³ sex; lust is the [magic] science. Love implies a deferring of the satisfaction of the desire; it implies a certain asceticism and a ritual. Lust drives forward urgently and scientifically to the immediate extirpation of the desire (Brooks 138).

As we have already pointed out, most of the patches of the works referred to in the poem are placed in juxtaposition. They undergo a slight distortion to achieve just the opposite effect we expect at first look. We have seen that age cannot wither Cleopatra, as is the case with the Sibyl. Moreover, the decoration of the interiors, painted in the passage, is worn, and synthetic.

Further description of the interior is added in order to refer to a love scene in the *Aeneid*. It seems that the tension rises to introduce Philomela's metamorphosis, which is carefully woven in the interior. *A carved dolphin* (96), formerly a representation of love and diligence, here swims in a sad light to show absence of love. The metaphor is strengthened by *the sylvan scene* (98), the description of Eden as seen through Satan's eyes, as it heralds the change of Philomela into a nightingale.

The cry of the nightingale appears in the poem in a couple of places and deserves special attention. As Tereus of Thrace, who married Procne, had a fiery lust for his sister-in law, Philomela: "Tereus beheld the virgin, and admir'd /

³ Square brackets mine.

And with the coals of burning lust was fir'd (Ovid, *The History of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela* 76-77). He lures her to his kingdom and rapes her. When Philomela threatens to tell the world of his crime, he cuts off her tongue and holds her prisoner. Philomela manages to tell her sister Procne about her husband's maltreatment. Procne consequently succeeds in freeing her sister. They, in their revenge, kill Itys, the son of Procne and Tereus, cut him up into pieces and make Tereus eat his son's flesh. Philomela then, during the dinner, throws the head of Itys to Tereus. He goes mad and runs after them, who, in order to escape turn into birds – nightingales⁴. Their feathers, stained with Itys's blood, remain the signs of the murder provoked by the rape. The nightingale's cry is thus a symbol of what happened with Philomela, which is lust and revenge. As lust is science, according to Ransom's explanation above, the nightingale's cry symbolises the scientifically oriented and thus secularised culture of the waste land. The girl⁵ with "... her hair / Spread out in fiery points ..." (109-110) is different from the girl with wet hair from the Hyacinth garden. Since in the Hyacinth garden a naïve love is expressed, here the relation between sexes is characterised with lust.

The next passage that stretches from line 111 to line 138 consists of unusual line-groupings that tend to achieve a special visual effect of ether uneasiness or of high level of creativity on the side of the speaker in the

⁴ I nevertheless have not found any evidence in Ovid of a nightingale. Ovid mentions birds and their feathers.

⁵ The image of the girl recalls the Festival of the Weeping Women discussed later below and alludes to lack of faith.

passage. However, the semantic value of the lines and frequently impatient questions grabbing any immediate answer are symptoms of the pathology of an insufficiently developed personality. The speaker, an inhabitant of the waste land, does not know what to do, so he is looking around to get the answer. It is very difficult for him to make a decision himself. He is a pathological narcissus, to whom just a thought of the smallest decision causes trembling questions: Am I right? What will they say? Will they like it? Lines in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* express the same sort of indecisiveness on the side of the protagonist:

And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With the bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* 32-40).

We see that even such routine activities, like "the taking a toast and tea", never mind "starting a conversation with the women downstairs", are under constant self-questioning. The answer in lines 115-116 recalls *The Hollow Men* and the type of the people who cannot face the eyes of the people around them.

Line 125 is words from Ariel's song sung to Ferdinand:

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.
 Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
 Ding-dong.
 Hark! Now I hear them – Ding-dong bell.
 (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* I.2.397-405).

Ariel, a spirit, is sent by his master Prospero to lead Ferdinand to meet Prospero's daughter Miranda. Although Ferdinand's father, King of Naples, helped Prospero's brother Antonio to usurp the dukedom of Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, Ariel sings a soothing song to Ferdinand to lessen his pain when faced with his father's death. Ariel says that Ferdinand's father's eyes are now pearls. Pearls are also the Phoenician sailor's eyes in line 48. The eyes are an allusion to the metamorphosis, which is fruitful death by water. The poet may want to say that the only way leads through metamorphosis. We will therefore investigate the nature of the transformation in the following passage first and then return to the course of the poem.

The symbolic value of a pearl remains almost unchanged through the history of human civilization. Its spherical shape connects it with a foetus and the full moon, and its sea origin with water. It is an ideal symbol, which joins birth, life, death, and rebirth in one unity; it therefore represents the yin principle, the principle of creative and fertile feminine nature.

Miss Weston compiled enough evidence to prove the existence of early conceptions of the vivifying power of waters. To Indra a disproportioned number of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* are addressed to beseech him for much desired rain (Weston 24). She says that "... a ceremonial 'marriage' very frequently formed a part of a 'Fertility' ritual ..." (Weston 29). She gives the example of a

ceremonial marriage from professor von Schroeder's discussion. It is the story of Rishyacringa, from *Mahâbhârata*. Here we find a young Brahmin brought up by his father in a lonely hermitage, absolutely detached from the outside world. It happens that a drought falls on a neighbouring kingdom. The King learns that so long as Rishyancringa continues chaste, so long will the drought endure. For this purpose a fair daughter of irregular life is provided to seduce him. She, after a couple of attempts, persuades him to join her on her ship, while he forgets his religious duties. They sail to the capital of the rainless land. There the King gives him his daughter as wife, and as soon as the marriage is consummated the rain falls in abundance (Weston 27-28). Miss Weston states that, "... there can be no doubt that the original *Perceval* story includes the marriage of the hero" (Weston 30).

As for the Fish-Fisher symbolism, we can say with certainty that the Fish is a life symbol of immemorial antiquity. Miss Weston acquaints us with the fact that in Buddhist religion the symbols of the Fish and Fisher are freely employed. "In Mâhâyana scriptures Buddha is referred to as the Fisherman who draws fish from the ocean of Samara to the light of Salvation" (Weston 120). As for the origin of the Christian Fish symbolism, it derives directly from the Jewish, and further back from the Syrian belief and practice. In pre-Christian cultures the Fisher King is the centre of a whole cult, either semi-divine or semi-human, standing between his people and the forces that control the elements (Weston 121-129).

Much could be said about the development of the symbol of drowning. Let us just mention that the idea of a Being upon whose life and reproductive

activities the very existence of Nature depends, was present at a period of some 3000 years B. C. The God, Being, Deity, by whatever name he may be called, was "... himself subject to the vicissitudes of declining powers and death, like an ordinary mortal ...” (Weston 39). We are also informed about the existence of the rituals in which kings played the role of Tammuz, where they by a symbolic act escaped the final penalty of sacrifice.

Adonis, the Phoenician-Greek deity, the descendant of the Sumerian-Babylonian god Tammuz, was also one with whose life and well-being the process of Nature was held to be connected. According to the Greek myth, Adonis has to abide with Persephone in the underworld for one part of the year and with Aphrodite in the upper world for the other part. Another version of the myth tells us that Adonis is mortally wounded by a wild boar. Both versions symbolize the seasonal growth of vegetation and its decline caused by the coming of drought, which was accompanied by ritual mourning, throwing an effigy of Adonis into the sea. James Frazer (390-417) provides us with rich, in colour and in number, descriptions of the rituals that took place in western Asia.

Our attempt above was to throw a glimpse upon the various and profound symbolism that derives from our distant forefathers, which is all about the cyclical nature of Creation. Neither we nor James Frazer nor Miss Weston, referred to above, are concerned with the question of universality of the institutions which either 'Nature Cults' or 'Life Cults' definitely were. In *The Waste Land* we are, however, faced on one side with people who are faithless, to whom any decision is a burden, and on the other with symbolic metamorphoses behind almost every picture in the poem. At this point it seems

that the loudest call of the poem is a need of any kind of belief that cannot be explained rationally. Let us just recall the metaphor “pearls instead of man’s eyes”. Eyes transform into pearls as man has his sight taken from him and given a new universal dimension. A good example is the metamorphosis of Shakespeare’s King Lear, who is capable of compassion after he loses his sight. There is also the metamorphosis that culminates in the ‘ritual’ marriage between Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest*, of which Ariel is a herald.

The last line in *A Game of Chess* is Ophelia’s departing words (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 4.5.72), “And her poetry, like Philomela’s, had come out of suffering” (Brooks 141).

The Fire Sermon is an allusion to Buddha’s preaching against all kinds of sensations that distract concentration and prevent people from achieving a higher level of existence. In other words, a blind man sees. We are faced with a picture of the Thames, no longer “... painted all with variable flowers,” (Spencer, line 13), where there are no nymphs “All lovely daughters of the flood thereby, “ (Spencer, line 21). The river, once a vein and an aorta in one stream, the banks of which used to be full of life, although a corrupted one, is now completely empty. The refrain from *Prothalamion* “Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.” (176) by Edmund Spencer, reiterated a couple of times, intensifies the overall strain. The compression of the symbols becomes more and more unbearable for the reader to deal with separately. They all become one symbol that answers the question what is the third part of *The Waste Land* about? The Thames still flows, but it is a dead limb which is no longer joined with the ocean,

like the link between the people of the waste land and the collective unconscious which has been torn apart.

The lines that follow allude to a number of metamorphoses, each accompanied by suffering. *Prothalamion* celebrates a forthcoming wedding. Line 182, taken from *The Old Testament* (Psalms 137.1), where the Hebrews are weeping by the rivers of Babylon and praying to the Lord, a bit distorted, alludes to the maimed Fisher King. A distortion of Andrew Marvell's lines, "But at my back I always hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near;" (*To His Coy Mistress* 21-22), where the poet wants to make love with his mistress before they both get old, now turns to the rattling of bones and chuckling that chases the people of the waste land.

In the passage that stretches from line 187 to line 201 we meet a compression of ironic distortions that, again, relate the present situation with the desired virtues. The activity of fishing is here connected with the title 'Fisher King' against Miss Weston's explanation that it originates from the use of the Fish as a fertility or life symbol. This is especially true of lines 191-192, where the whole passage is the allusion to Ferdinand's monologue (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 1.2.288-296) just before Ariel's song. Cleanth Brooks suspects that it was the intention of the poet to "... bring the account of *The Tempest* into the accord with the situation in the Percival stories" (Brooks 142-143). However, 'my brother's wreck' may mean that narrator himself and the people around have wrecked their lives. Another alteration with an ironic effect takes place in lines 197-198, where Day's words from *Parliament of Bees* are changed and instead of Acteon and Diana, Sweeney and Mrs. Porter are set. While Acteon is

a man of decision, Sweeney is a type of indecisive vulgar bourgeois we have already met in Eliot's earlier poems, and, while Diana is the goddess of chastity, Mrs. Porter and her daughter are hardly chaste. They wash their feet in a popular beverage, which is different from what Parsifal does before entering the castle of the Grail in Wagner's opera (*Norton Anthology* 2153).

In the next four lines (203-206) Philomela's singing reminds us of the burning lust which is the core of the matter. The singing is followed by another picture from 'Unreal City' with the Smyrna merchant, who is no longer a worshipper of the cult of Adonis, but a merchant from modern Izmir in Turkey.

In the next passage (215-248) a seer named Tiresias is introduced. We learn from Eliot's notes to the poem that both sexes meet in Tiresias, who has, according to the myth ([http #3](http://www.ancient.eu/article.php?id=133)), passed two metamorphoses, and is consequently blind with the power of seeing the future. The metaphor with "a taxi throbbing waiting" seems to show clearly where the problem is and what Tiresias sees. Any taxi can drive a passenger to any destination; it needs just clear instructions.

Tiresias sees a 'typist type' of a fisher that seeks refuge at the violet hour. We are exposed to the incident between her and the carbuncular young man. Both of the protagonists are forced to the sexual act, which is "... unreproved, if undesired ..." (238) to prove to themselves that they still exist. What Tiresias sees is the difference between two kinds of sexual relationships, as Brooks (144-155) explains by alluding to Eliot's thoughts in his essay on Baudelaire: "... what distinguishes the relations between man and woman from the copulation of beasts is the knowledge of Good and Evil ..." (Eliot, *Baudelaire* 428-429).

The curse has come upon the Theban land, which is a consequence of the sinful relationship of Oedipus and Jocasta. But Oedipus' sin has been committed in ignorance, while the sexual act in the poem is not a sin at all, it is an every day occurrence, the worst thing that can possibly happen.

The passage that follows (257-265) gives a contrast between two parts of the city, one being empty, the other the last refuge of true values, which is a ray of hope in the darkness.

Every end is at the same time a new beginning. *The Fire Sermon* begins on the Thames and ends on it as well. From Eliot's note to the Thames daughters passage we know that he parallels them with the Rhine-maidens, who play an important role in Wagner's tetralogy *The Ring Cycle*. The cycle consists of four operas: *The Rhinegold (Das Rheingold)*, *The Valkyrie (Walküre)*, *Siegfried*, and *The Twilight of Gods (Götterdämmerung)*. In *The Rhinegold* the hoard of gold, of which a powerful ring could be made, is taken cunningly from the Rhine-maidens, who have been charged to guard the treasure. The gold, however, could be taken freely by anyone who renounces love's sway and spurns the sweets of sensual enjoyment. But with Alberich, who takes the gold, it is not so (Eversen 1-15). In *The Twilight of Gods* the ring made of the gold is in possession of Siegfried, a young hero, who is capable of resisting the maiden's seduction and threats, but not the powers of the cursed ring (http #3).

The hero fails to resist the powers of the ring, as the people of the waste land fail to resist sensuous temptations. That is why the beauty of the river has gone, and consequently the modern Thames flows dirty. The second song of

the Thames-maidens alludes to the love between Queen Elizabeth and the earl of Leicester, which was fruitless as well.

In the third part the Thames-daughters speak in turn by alluding to the distinction between Purgatory and the Inferno, playing with different parts of today's London. Their song symbolically reflects the state of affairs in the waste land.

The collocation of the representatives of eastern and western asceticism in lines 306-311, explained in Eliot's notes to the poem, reflects Eliot's universal orientation to the religious belief which is the undividable part of culture. It is worth mentioning here that before its first publication in 1922 in the magazine *The Criterion*, *The Waste Land* had been edited by Ezra Pound, who had shortened the manuscript substantially and compressed it even more strongly. *The Criterion*, edited by T. S. Eliot himself, "... had never published and reviewed a narrow field of work, but had received contributions from all over Europe" (Pearce 16). Eliot closed the magazine himself in 1939 after the collapse of the integrity of European culture for which it strongly stood (Pearce 16). As for religious belief, it may be assumed that for Eliot the substance of religion is what counts, but not its name, national or ethnical boundaries, or geographical region.

The Fire Sermon is in apparent contrast to *Death by Water*. The material world and everything that arises from it is on fire in the former. 'Eye-consciousness' that conditions its existence burns until the fire is extinguished by water. In Wagner's opera *The Rhinegold*, the hoard of gold is symbolically taken from the water that cools its burning. The burning lust of the typist and the

carbuncular man, which is resistance to natural order, is set contrary to the tranquillity of the drowning of which we are witnesses in part IV. Miss Weston (44) shows the ritual throwing an effigy of Adonis into the sea in Alexandria, which represented death of the powers of nature. It was then carried for seven days by the current to Byblos, where it was pulled from water as the resurrected or renewed powers. Phlebas the Phoenician, in part IV at least, no longer resists the challenges of the temporal world, which is burning; his surrender, the absence of resistance, is a relief to him. The denouement in *The Rhinegold*, where Wotan finally gives the Ring to the Giants, who in exchange release Freia, directly corresponds to the present state in *Death by Water*. There is relief present among the Gods, but the absence of resistance is not enough; unfortunately, there is lack of willingness on Wotan's side to exchange, symbolically, the cursed Ring for love. Wotan is uncertain with regard to what the future will bring. Donner, the god of thunder and lightning, calls for a storm.

The fifth part, *What the Thunder Said*, expresses, according to the state of affairs among the Gods, uncertainty for the future of humanity. Although the Gods speak in the final part of the poem by suggesting what should be done, they do not give their suggestions in terms of clear statements; it is up to the wisdom of the people to explain to themselves what it is.

Eliot informs us in his notes to the poem that in the first part of part V, three themes are employed: the approach to the Chapel Perilous, the present decay of eastern Europe, and the journey to Emmaus. As for the Chapel Perilous, we meet it in the Grail romances, where the hero has to pass a mysterious adventure with extreme peril to life (Weston 165-177). Miss Weston proves that

these elements are nothing else than the heritage of pre-Christian mystery rituals that came, through having been accepted by Imperial Rome, to Christianity. On the basis of the Naassene document she shows that these rituals comprised a double initiation, the Lower, into the mysteries of physical Life, and the higher, into the Spiritual Divine Life (Weston 141-154). Therefore the approach to the Perilous Chapel related in the poem represents a bodily test, passing of which makes one ready to apply for the higher spiritual one.

The allusions to Jesus Christ's terrestrial life shortly before His crucifixion are more concerned with bodily tests and refer to the Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 22), where the following lines exemplify the situation:

- 44. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- 45. And when he rose up from prayer and was come to the disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,
- 46. And said unto them, *Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* (Luke 22.44-46).

The concern with spiritual firmness in the poem is expressed by the allusions to the journey to Emmaus, which takes place on the third day after Jesus Christ's death, on Easter, the day of His resurrection:

- 13. And, behold two of them went the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.
- 14. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.
- 15. And it came to pass, that while they commuted *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.
- 16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.
(Luke 24.13-16).

In the previous passage we dealt with the themes of the sources referred to in the first part of part V. Let us now proceed to the imagery within the poem. Lines from 322 to 330 clearly refer to the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus Christ's going to the mount of Olives (Luke 22). The projection on the people of the waste land means that they should resist the earthly temptations symbolized by "red on sweaty faces". The path leads up the mountain, where earth and sky meet. The play with tenses "We who were living are now dying" (329) tells that the life before was not real life; it was life like death.

The next passage, which takes us among the mountains, intensified by hard beats of strong symbols like the one before, refers again to the garden of Gethsemane. There is only *rock*, an unchangeable object, the highest principle, towards which the people should go to get the link with the self. In lines 338 to 339 the comparison between a solid rock and a watery one is given, which clearly divides eternal and human nature. The bipolarity of Creation is expressed here most profoundly – it is not enough to be told, one needs to pass it, the poet says.

The passage through lines from 360 to 366 refers to the journey to Emmaus and is an allusion to spiritual firmness. There is a lack of faith, for the eyes of the people are "holden". The biblical expression means that there is not a physical obstacle that prevents the people from seeing the hooded person always beside them.

Lines 367 to 377 paint a picture of the present decay of the western and eastern world. The violet air, of the colour that is a mixture of red and blue and therefore represents a balance between earth and sky, is cracked, as the

religions of the East and the West are decayed. Further decay is present in the next passage (378-385), where the *Festival of the Weeping Women* (Weston 45) is recalled, during which the curious practice of cutting off the hair in honour of the god takes place.

Women who hesitate to make this sacrifice must offer themselves to strangers, either in the temple, or on the market-place, the gold received as the price of their favours being offered to the goddess (Weston 45).

It is not hard to find parallels to the practice described above in modern world, for example, within total institutions. All individuals are obliged to subordinate themselves to the society they live in. The image of “long hair” by recalling the ritual described above once more emphasizes a lack of spiritual firmness in the people of the waste land.

In lines 386-395 the questing night is before the horrors of the Chapel Perilous, passing of which is, according to Miss Weston, an initiation into the mysteries of physical life. We can associate it with baptism, where a candidate becomes a full member of the church after he or she has been exposed to a symbolic bodily test usually connected with water. There “Only a cock stood on the rooftree” (392) and with its crowing chases away evil forces, which prevent the beneficent rain from falling.

The past tense in lines from 379 to 400 casts another terrible shadow on the people of the waste land and their prosperity. It recalls a picture of a land where either nature cults or a belief in another supernatural force was still alive. An additional reason for fear is the presence of the legend from the Brihadanaryaka Upanishad, an early Indian religious scripture originating from the times far

before the birth and expansion of Christianity. The thunder, however, speaks in onomatopoeic *Da, Da, Da*, which is understood by each group differently:

V-ii-1: Three classes of Prajapati's sons lived a life of continence with their father, Prajapati (Viraj) – the gods, men and Asuras. The gods, on the completion on their term, said, 'Please instruct us'. He told them the syllable 'Da' (and asked), 'have you understood?' (They) said, 'We have. You tell us: Control yourselves'. (He) said, 'Yes, you have understood'.

V-ii-2: Then the men said to him, 'Please instruct us'. He told them the same syllable 'Da' (and asked), 'Have you understood?' (They) said, 'We have. You tell us: Give'. (He) said, 'Yes, you have understood'.

V-ii-3: Then Asuras said to him, 'Please instruct us'. He told them the same syllable 'Da' (and asked), 'Have you understood?' (They) said, 'We have. You tell us: Have compassion'. (He) said, 'Yes you have understood'. That every thing is repeated by the heavenly voice, the cloud, as 'Da', 'Da', 'Da': 'Control yourselves', 'Give', and 'Have compassion', Therefore one should learn these three – self control, charity and compassion (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* V-ii-1 – V-ii-3).

Moreover, the instructions of the thunder *control yourselves* – as understood by the gods, *give* – as understood by men, and *have compassion* – as understood by the Auras seem the universal principles of life. They can be easily taken for the suggested maxims of behaviour for the modern world. There is also an image of a closed door that should open, which appears in a couple of places in the poem, and which symbolizes the inflationary ego. Both the instructions adopted and the symbol of the narcissist personality developed through the poem reveal what should be done in the future.

In the last passage of the poem the narrator sitting upon the shore recapitulates not just his poem but also his life. Line 426 corresponds to Isaiah's words addressed to Hezekiah: "... Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not to live" (Isaiah 38.1) and alludes to the narrator's awareness of his mortality. He may also be aware of the prisoner in

him as recalled in line 427 by the verses of the nursery song, where later lines go: "Here's a prisoner I have got," and later "What'll you take to set him free," (*London Bridge*). Lines 428 to 430 reflect hope as they refer to the stories where change in the characters is present. Line 428 is from the seventh, the final, Cornice on Dante's way up Mount Purgatory, where the fire has a refining function, contrary to the one of lust: "Then he hid himself in the fire which refines them" (*Purgatorio* 26.148). In the works referred to in line 429 the characters seek for the identification with the swallow, which is free to make changes, and thus show readiness to change themselves. The ruined tower mentioned in line 430 (*Norton Anthology* 2160) symbolically gives an opportunity for new growth as the old walls have been removed. The mere awareness of the fact that any malicious act sooner or later strikes with the same intensity the very person that commits it, as in line 432, where Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* is referred to, reflects hope on the side of the speaker. "Shantih Shantih Shantih" is an ending and beginning to each Upanishad, which means *Peace, Peace, Peace*.

We may take the instructions as given by the thunder for the basic wisdom of man. We may also take as accepted that the poet knows the state of affairs of the time he lives in. If this holds it would have been enough just to tell a couple of lines, for example concerning crucifixion or resurrection, to suggest to the audience what to do. Another thing we must not overlook is that we deal with incontestable truth, which cannot be either argued against or proved by scientific instruments, but has to be taken as assumed. I am firmly convinced that it is all a method how to tell the theme, and that the only successful way is

an indirect one and in terms of the absolute. We can try to describe a thing just with onomatopoeia, for example *Om*, about which a lot can be written, but it is for the persuaded. In a society governed by instrumentalism the only way, either to introduce a concept or to strengthen an existing one, which unfortunately has not been inherited in sufficient intensity, is to help the audience to develop it. This is exactly what Eliot does in the poem. The characters melt from one to the other, and symbols and relations change their substance. We learn who, where, how, what, and that the solution is to be sought somewhere outside the narrow ego, but we develop it ourselves through the poem. A concept may be so complex that words do not suffice.

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