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IF THERE WERE ONLY WATER: WATER SYMBOLISM IN *THE WASTE LAND*

Abstract: This paper seeks to interpret the fundamental Modernist poem *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot through a set of ideas existing in and arguably creating Modernism as it is known – the mythology of water as the fundamental but fickle fluid Other, subsisting at the basic level of the world and giving life to it while constantly needing to be controlled and tamed by a superior civilizing force – usually masculine – colonizing and taming the unruly savage. This mythology of water has at its core the story of katabasis/nekyia, a symbolic night journey over water deriving from ancient imaginaries, leading into Hell and back. The journey begins with exile from the rational, stable civilized world, and descent into the irrational, chaotic, watery depths of the unconscious and prime matter. In this underwater Hades or Hell, the hero is confronted with the watery beast that is the basis of carnal life at whose hands he suffers a symbolic death, which leads to a rebirth. The beast is often a guardian of precious life-giving treasure, and the victorious hero is allowed to take the spoils with him back to the surface.

Keywords: *The Waste Land*, T. S. Eliot, Modernism, myth/religion/philosophy, sexuality/gender, katabasis/nekyia

The era of Modernism in the West arguably emerged owing to a fascinating amalgam of anthropological knowledge gained through colonial expansion, the impact of the Darwinian theory of evolution, and the development of Freudian psychoanalysis, all of which seemed to dwell on the notion of excavating the deeper, darker truths that formed the basis of the world and humankind. These disturbing but fundamental 'others' – the material, the animalistic, the primitive, and the unconscious – were perceived as standing in opposition to the stable world of civilization and reason, and were commonly associated with water.

This mythology of water has at its core the story of katabasis/nekyia, a symbolic night journey over water leading into Hell and back – a transformative passage entailing the "destruction and rebirth of the self through an encounter with the absolute Other" (Falconer 2007: 1), which Orpheus, Theseus, Jason, Heracles, Demeter, Odysseus, and Aeneas underwent. Water certainly symbolizes the absolute Other of culture and has done so at least since Plato's matrix of all being depicted the formless fluidity of primordial matter being shaped by eternal Ideas to create the world as we know it.

Freud and Jung delineated the hero's journey, commencing with his exile from the rational, stable civilized world, and descent into the irra-

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tional, chaotic, watery depths of the unconscious and prime matter. In this underwater Hades or Hell, the hero is confronted with the watery beast that is the basis of carnal life, at whose hands he suffers a symbolic death, which leads to a rebirth. The beast is often a guardian of precious life-giving treasure, and the victorious hero is allowed to take the spoils with him back to the surface.

The Waste Land was composed under extraordinary circumstances. T. S. Eliot, already in exile from his native United States, found himself in further exile from polite society, his respectable position in the City of London Bank, and sanity, when, on the verge of a nervous breakdown, he obtained paid leave to recuperate, first in the seaside resort of Margate, and then in Lausanne, on the Lake Geneva shoreline. Twice exiled, near these two bodies of water, Eliot was able to release the frustration and disgust with the contemporary world that had long been amassing. The poem was, at least in part, the result of an almost visionary outpouring of verse, as the draft of its closing, "What the Thunder Said", containing the "moral" of the whole, shows no signs of laborious construction and reconstruction, and even the otherwise merciless Pound suggested no alterations.

When asked about the intention behind *The Waste Land*, Eliot replied: "I wonder what an 'intention' means! One wants to get something off one's chest. One doesn't know quite what it is that one wants to get off the chest until one's got it off. But I couldn't apply the word 'intention' positively to any of my poems. Or to any poem." (Cox and Hincliffe 1968: 26). He also regretted "having sent so many enquirers off on a wild goose chase after Tarot cards and the Holy Grail." (Eliot 1942: 110). Nevertheless, I do not think it quite impermissible to go fishing for intentions or questing for the Grail in *The Waste Land*.

The poem fundamentally tells of a journey over water in search of water. The true water of life is missing, and the existing experiential water has been sullied. What little vitality it may offer is trivial and disturbing, and it is more often than not associated with the horrors of vain womanhood and sinful sexuality. This dirtied state requires purgation, which can be achieved through water, and most dramatically via death by water, which can then bring peace and a much-needed transformation. The peace, stillness and order of asceticism, which controls the experiential waters, and is symbolized by rocks and mountains in the poem, seems more likely to bring the true waters of life than unrestrained and disordered passions.

1. Empty Cisterns and Exhausted Wells: Dryness, Exile, Quest

Eliot's poem depicts a waste land, both realistically contemporary and mythically universal, whose dryness must be relieved by the true waters of life. Bowra warns that this dryness is not merely a political or

personal state: “This land is much more than post-war Europe or the poet drooping among the Philistines. It is something desiccated which needs refreshment’ to quench ‘the thirst of the waste land’.” (Bowra 1949: 164). Collingwood attempts to define more precisely, though consequently less accurately, what it is that is absent from the waste land:

> The poem depicts a world where the wholesome flowing water of emotion, which alone fertilizes all human activity, has dried up. Passions that once ran so strongly as to threaten the defeat of prudence, the destruction of human individuality, the wreck of men’s little ships, are shrunk to nothing. (Collingwood 1968: 51)

Eliot’s reference to “empty cisterns and exhausted wells” (Eliot 1956: 42, ln. 384) points towards another level of interpretation, as it alludes to the words of prophet Jeremiah, through whom God warns that “they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”. Consequently, “they made his [Israel’s] land waste” (*The Holy Bible*, KJV, Jeremiah 2: 13–15). The following verses then vividly describe the ensuing drought, as the dryness on the spiritual plane is translated literally onto the physical.

Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance*, a study from which Eliot drew some of the inspiration for *The Waste Land*, connects the Christian Grail legend, telling of a pure hero’s quest for the Holy Grail which will end the drought in the land of the infirm Fisher King, with more ancient fertility myths and rituals. In the many myths and legends she cites, the drought can be ended by the hero performing a fertility ritual and thus freeing the waters. The Grail theme is actually introduced in the poem as early as line 10, in reference to the Starnbergersee, the lake in which King Ludwig drowned. Ludwig was mad and sick, and Wagner in his *Götterdämmerung* dubbed him Amfortas, the sick king whom Parsifal will relieve with the Grail.

The questing hero of *The Waste Land* visits the Tarot-reading clairvoyante, Madame Sosostris, who tells him “his” card is the drowned Phoenician sailor, which establishes a connection between the two figures, and both are further connected with Adonis. Effigies of Adonis were, according to Frazer, thrown into the sea or into springs as burial in Western Asia, the Greek lands, and, most significantly here, Phoenicia (Frazer 1993: 335). The subsequent resurrection of Adonis was supposed to result in the return of water, fertility, and life.

Considering how prominent this theme of quest for the water to alleviate the dryness of the waste land is, it can be easy to neglect that Eliot’s “waste land” is in fact already flooded by water. Some instances of existing water signify the feeling of exile. The association of Lake Leman with the rivers of Babylon in the line “By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept” (Eliot 1956: 34, ln. 182) simultaneously evokes Eliot’s exile in Switzerland, the Jews’ exile in the pagan land of Babylon, and man’s exile in a fallen

universe. Some are merely artificial surrogates for the real waters of life, like the "hot water at ten". Mrs. Porter and her daughter's soda water is likewise a poor substitute for the true lustral waters alluded to in the next verse. Some are eluded, as people are purposely made impervious to them, like the couple's routine of "if it rains, a closed car at four", and the protagonist's attempt to evade the spring rain that stirs dull roots in April.

The vast majority of the water present in the waste land is experienced and expressed in extremely negative terms. What water there is seems to be mostly dirty or rather dirtied water, associated usually with what is apparently experienced as sinful forms of sexuality. Tamplin explains this by a distinction between divine and passional water, which he insists Eliot must have found in Colin Still's *Shakespeare's Mystery Play: A Study of The Tempest*, which interprets the play as a ritual of initiation. In Still's terms, the initiate has a choice between divine and passional things, which also includes a choice between the two kinds of water. "This distinction", according to Tamplin, "explains why water is longed for, although there is so much already in the poem." (Tamplin 1967: 358). The waste land is flooded by passional water, but it is divine water that is so desperately needed.

The April rain that stirs the dull roots of life can be seen as either passional or divine, or both. Brooks sees April as "the month of rebirth" and explains that it causes unease because people "dislike to be roused from their death-in-life" (Brooks 1968: 61). Wetzel, on the other hand, associates the vitality of spring with banality, noting that in Mann's novella *Tonio Kröger*, which Eliot may have read, the protagonist remembers the quiet life during winter, when he was able to distance himself from "the triviality of life". Conversely, Marie enjoys spring and life so much that she evades winter and night. The hyacinth girl is, in Wetzel's view, another representative of the triviality of life and spring: "Hyacinths, the spring flowers, easily symbolize fertility" and thus both vitality and banality. The young man, however, paralyzed by his profound and still "looking into the heart of light" is "immune to the flowers' and the girl's appeal". All this leads Wetzel to conclude that "vitality and banality belong together" (Wetzel 1970: 322–326).

Hyacinths also feature in Eliot's "Dans le Restaurant" ("J'avais sept ans, elle était plus petite. / Elle était toute mouillé, je lui ai donné des primevères."), and the scene depicted is very similar. The rain that falls on the young couple in "Dans le Restaurant" explains why the hyacinth girl's hair is wet in *The Waste Land*. This rain serves to excite, sexualize and in a way dirty the children in the poem, and dramatic weather, especially rain, is implicitly connected with passion: "Dans mon pays il fera temps pluvieux, / Du vent, du grand soleil, et de la pluie". The implication is that these weather conditions cause the people, even children, to be somehow sullied by excessive sexuality. The disgusted auditor feels compelled to offer the dirty old man money for a bath: "Tiens, voilà dix sous, pour la

salle-de-bains." (Eliot 1936: 51–52). The water symbolism and imagery of the two poems are fundamentally the same, and all the stages of the water journey as it unfolds in *The Waste Land* are already present in "Dans le Restaurant". Springtime rains signal the awakening of life and vitality, but also sexuality, passion, and sin. This equals dirt, necessitating the lustral waters of the "salle-de-bains" and the ultimate purification of death. The ending of the poem became part IV of *The Waste Land*, almost word for word. Phlebas is here the old, lecherous waiter, who finally drowns and thus achieves peace and purity.

What water there is in *The Waste Land* either offers unwanted, banal vitality, or is somehow dirtied, like the Thames literally is. The song of the Thames-daughters, according to Gish, "establishes an attitude toward the river and those who sail on it that is appropriately closed with a lament" ("Weialala leia / Wallala leialala"). The lament is taken from the song of the Rhine maidens who, in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, "weep because the river's gold has been stolen and the river's beauty is gone" (Gish 1988: 80). Spenser's "Sweet Thames" has also undergone a dramatic change for the worse, and now "The river sweats / Oil and tar" (Eliot 1956: 37, ln. 266–267). Is there a contrast between the Thames of Spenser's and Eliot's times, or are we to see both as potentially sullied? Could the relationship between Elizabeth and Leicester, rowing on the Thames, have been seen by Eliot as equally vacuous to that between the typist and the clerk? Pritchard for one finds no real "ancient-modern" contrast in the poem and contends that both versions of the Thames are beautiful in a way – and in Spenser's times, he conjectures, it was also probably dirty (Pritchard 1969: 188–189). That this may very well be true can, ironically, be seen in "Prothalamion" itself, when two white swans appear on the Thames and "the gentle stream, the which them bare, / Seemed foul to them, and bade his billows spare / To wet their silken feathers, lest they might / Soil their fair plumes with water not so fair" (Spenser 1932: 339). Time seems to be insignificant here, after all, as the contrast between pure and passional water is spiritual rather than historical, and the change in the water is for both poets most likely the result of the Fall, which started time itself.

2. The Waters of Leman: Sexuality, Sin, Woman

Exile from the true life in this disordered world is lamented in the line "By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept" (Eliot 1956: 34, ln. 182). The waters of Leman seem to be all the unwanted, disturbing, and sometimes sullied waters of this world, and Gish gives a thorough list of the possible implications of the word:

> Lake Leman is the French name for lake Geneva in Switzerland, where Eliot, in his own emotional and physical exile, wrote the poem. 'Leman' also means a lover, and the connotations are ambiguous. It can mean a sweetheart and

occasionally a husband or wife. It is even used at times in reference to Christ or the Virgin as the beloved. But it can also mean a mistress or prostitute. It combines the ideas of illicit sensuality and true or sacred love. (Gish 1988: 73)

Eliot's notorious ambiguity enabled him to use all the implications in the poem, but "illicit sensuality" is the poetic subject's most common reason to weep, and his lament is to a large degree caused by despair at the ubiquity of sexual sin.

Existent water in the poem is associated with sexuality, lust, and sin. Mrs. Porter, who, along with her daughter, washes her feet in soda water, comes from a song the Australian soldiers sang when they landed on Gallipoli in 1915. She "seems to have kept a bawdy-house in Cairo" and "was a legendary figure with them" (Bowra 1949: 182).

On the Thames, the wild "summer nights" are consummated by "nymphs" and "their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors" (Eliot 1956: 34, ln. 179–180). This sexual scene is, significantly, immediately followed by a characteristic *memento mori*, combining the images of bones, rats, and death, all somehow linked with water, including a reference to the watery deaths of Shakespeare's *Tempest*:

> But at my back in a cold blast I hear
> The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.
> A rat crept softly through the vegetation
> Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
> While I was fishing in the dull canal
> On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
> Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
> And on the king my father's death before him.
> (Eliot 1956: 34, ln 185–192)

Sexual sin, represented by the waters of Leman, seems to warrant death, and its *topos* is again usually water. It can be the Thames, as it is for the nymphs and their friends. One of the Thames-daughters testifies that "Richmond and Kewes / Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees / Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe". It can also be the sea, as another Thames-daughter implies that her undoing took place "On Margate Sands" (Eliot 1956: 38, ln. 293–300). Mr. Eugenides asks the protagonist "To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel / Followed by a weekend at the Metropole" (Eliot 1956: 35, ln. 213–214). Gish notes that the Metropole is a fashionable hotel at the sea resort of Brighton, and a "weekend at Brighton" is "a phrase understood to carry sexual connotations", so this sounds like a homosexual proposition. Eliot reportedly "denied thinking of that implication", however (Gish 1988: 75).

What is cited in *The Waste Land* regarding Tristan and Isolde's passion are two instances of their sailing over the sea towards each other, but never meeting. Their infatuation proves to be selfish and in vain. Eliz-

abeth and Leicester, in a barge, “Beating oars” and talking “nonsense” about getting married on the spot, also exhibit a futile, fruitless, and somewhat scandalous passion. The line introducing the wife describes “The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne” (Eliot 1956: 29, ln. 77). Eliot states in his notes that this is a direct allusion to “The barge she sat in, like a burnish’d throne” (Shakespeare, *A&C*, II.ii.190), which is part of a description of Cleopatra in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*. What Eliot does not mention is that this line is immediately preceded in the play with: “When she first met Mark Antony, she / purs’d up his heart upon the river of Cydnus” (Shakespeare, A&C, II.ii.186–187), so another river and another boat become places of sexual temptation in the wider context of the poem. Cleopatra seduces Antony, appearing first in a barge, and lures him away from his true vocation, instead of which he succumbs to mere lust. In all of the above instances, boats and barges are *topoi* of sexual temptation. The boat is, however, traditionally more often a symbol of safety from passional waters, representing the material world. This image of boats as places of seduction may have been suggested to Eliot by Weston in her *From Ritual to Romance*, where she, paraphrasing from the Mahabharata, gives the

> story of Rishyaçriñga, […] brought up by his father, Vibhândaka, in a lonely forest hermitage absolutely ignorant of the outside world, and even of the very existence of beings other than his father and himself. He has never seen a woman, and does not know that such a creature exists.

A drought falls upon a neighbouring kingdom, and the inhabitants are reduced to great straits for lack of food. The King, seeking to know by what means the sufferings of his people may be relieved, learns that so long as Rishyaçriñga continues chaste so long will the drought endure. An old woman, who has a fair daughter of irregular life, undertakes the seduction of the hero. The King has a ship, or raft (both versions are given), fitted out with all possible luxury, and an apparent Hermit’s cell erected upon it. The old woman, her daughter and companions, embark; and the river carries them to a point not far from the young Brahmin’s hermitage.

Taking advantage of the absence of his father, the girl visits Rishyaçriñga in his forest cell, giving him to understand that she is a Hermit [and] persuades the boy to accompany her to her ‘Hermitage’ which she assures him, is far more beautiful than his own. So soon as Rishyaçriñga is safely on board the ship sails, the lad is carried to the capital of the rainless land, the King gives him his daughter as wife, and so soon as the marriage is consummated the spell is broken, and rain falls in abundance. (Weston 1920: ch. 3)

Eliot’s negative view of boats stems from his ambivalence towards sex. In the story, the hermit is really tempted and tricked, and his, to Eliot, laudable asceticism is discontinued. However, this is what brings the rain.

Likewise, in the legend of the Fisher King, the drought caused by the old king's infirmity can be ended "by some other person, who through sexual intercourse breaks the doom of sterility" (Bowra 1949: 164). It is clear that, like that of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris, the Fisher King's wound is sexual, and thus causes drought and sterility of his lands. Many other stories of wounded kings and gods seem to confirm this. (Trilling 1967: 942) For Eliot, however, the sexual wound is the very misuse and perversion of sexuality, and this is what, at least in part, causes the dryness and sterility of his waste land. Tiresias' "I who have sat by Thebes below the wall" (Eliot 1956: 36, ln. 245) recalls the blind seer in *Oedipus the King* who knows that the land of Thebes has been made waste by the incestuous marriage between Oedipus and his mother.

Sexual sterility and the spiritual sterility of the waste land coalesce in the childless and very possibly sexually dysfunctional marriage of the couple, and the chemical abortion of Lil and Albert's sixth child. Like the land's, Lil's beauty is destroyed by "them pills I took, to bring it off" (Eliot 1956: 33, ln. 158). Fertility as part of sexual love ordered to marriage is what might bring back the waters of life. But all the liaisons in the poem, and there are many, are "failures, hysterical or frustrated or perfunctory or guilt-ridden. Such love-making cannot bring a spiritual revival" (Bowra 1949: 170).

All this sexual activity, which according to the legend might (if it were ritually proper) but cannot (because it is disordered) bring water is, seemingly paradoxically, experienced and expressed in terms of water. To Bowra, the "recurring theme of water suggests that the revival which the world needs is near and possible but is somehow missed or put to the wrong purpose or undertaken in the wrong spirit" (Bowra 1949: 171). The quality of extant water is, however, more suggestive of the omnipresence of water after a flood. Sexuality might end the drought, but when all sexual restraint is gone, a flood is inevitable, resulting in an overabundance of stale, dirty, contaminated, and deadly water. A similar state of affairs has once been aptly described as "Water, water, every where, / Nor any drop to drink".

Wilson had issues with Eliot's perceived "ascetic shrinking from sexual experience and the distress at the drying up of the springs of sexual emotion, with the straining after a religious emotion which may be made to take its place" (Wilson 1968: 100). Smidt retorted that it "may be maintained with equal justice that the drying up of the springs of religious emotion causes a straining after sexual emotion which may be made to take its place" (Smidt 1949: 196). Either way, there is a firm link between sexuality and spirituality in the poem. The connection between sexuality and spirituality may be undeniable in Eliot's poem, but this does not make these "emotions" interchangeable or mutually exclusive. Like any other imagined link between the spiritual and the material worlds, this one also of necessity operates under strict laws of hierarchy, as the spiri-

tual plane is usually above the physical and determines it. Drew noted on the subject that the world of "natural order", with its cycles, certainly is significant, but it is insufficient, and the "spiritual law" must complement it (Drew 1973: 1).

However, it cannot be denied that sexuality itself seems to be somehow inherently problematic to Eliot. Leavis notes that Eliot's "attitudes with reference to sex have been, in prose and poetry, almost uniformly negative – attitudes of distaste, disgust and rejection" (Leavis 1963: 245). In the *Waste Land* MS., the young man carbuncular, promptly leaving the typist after their encounter, walks the street, "And at the corner where the stable is, / Delays only to urinate, and spit" (Valerie Eliot 1971: 35). This places the ejaculation of only minutes before in the context of other "disgusting" physiological excretions.

What is even more difficult to comprehend rationally is Eliot's oft noted "distrust and dislike of woman" (Weinberg 1969: 31) and "persistent fear of women" (Gish 1988: 30). Gish finds the root of this in unpublished poems like "Death of St. Narcissus" and "Elegy", which, in her interpretation, express "guilt and remorse at sexual experience and the wish for a loved one to stay dead" (Gish 1988: 30). Narcissus, in the shape of a young girl, experiences rape at the hands of an old man, and "Elegy" depicts the death by water of the unmistakably male Bleistein. Peter states much less ambiguously that Eliot must have had "a close romantic attachment to another young man" and this "friendship was rudely cut short when the other was drowned" (Peter 1969: 166). As water is inextricably and multiply linked with female sexuality and fertility, and male homosexual tendencies are decidedly not, it is only reasonable to expect problems in the water symbolism to follow in *The Waste Land*. Instead of a real fear of drowning as annihilation in the animalistic and lethal feminine element, there is only disgust with filthy waters and women in general, and death by water brings peaceful oblivion away from the horrors of sexuality. Homosexual intercourse must by definition be sterile, and thus cannot bring regeneration to the waste land, or it can be abstained from if one stays in the closet, in which case April is understandably the cruelest month.

The choice of Tiresias, who has had the privilege of experiencing intercourse with both sexes, for the focal consciousness of *The Waste Land*, seems even less accidental in light of this, as does his reaction to what he "sees". It is exclusively heterosexual liaisons that Tiresias witnesses, and Lucas and Myers note that, although his view of the waste land is supposed to be descriptive, his tone does not have "the note of controlled and pained wisdom we might expect; instead it is one of barely controlled disgust" (Lucas and Myers 1969: 201). This is disgust with women and female sexuality.

This disgust is much more explicit in the MS. of *The Waste Land*. The young socialite Fresca is shown preparing for an evening out in the original opening of the "Fire Sermon". After writing a letter, "to the steaming

bath she moves, / Her tresses fanned by little flutt'ring Loves; / Odours, confected by the artful French, / Disguise the good old hearty female stench" (Valerie Eliot 1971: 23). Women are apparently naturally disgusting, and stink even right after taking a bath.

The line "Fresca was baptised in a soapy sea" was subsequently changed into "Fresca was born upon a soapy sea". The change in imagery used is indicative of Eliot's wavering thoughts on what to make of female sexuality. Fresca lingers between the two Pelagias, the two typical feminine figures "of the sea" – Aphrodite, Courtesan, goddess of sexual love and the sea, on the one hand, and the type of the penitent sinner, St. Pelagia, on the other (Warner 1978: 235). This is confirmed in "Fresca! in other time or place had been / A meek and weeping Magdalene". She finally becomes the former, as she possesses an "eternal and consuming itch" and a "real appetite". Women are seen in the MS. as especially lustful, and such carnal desire in women does not seem to exist in the final version of *The Waste Land*, where they are instead seen more as indifferent "victims" of men's insatiable appetites, like the typist and Lil.

The concluding lines of the scene are followed by the familiar "But at my back from time to time I hear / The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear" (Valerie Eliot 1971: 27). Connecting a *memento mori* motif with the vanity of a woman in vanity is an almost conventional device, and seems more in line with Eliot's sensibility. Where it stands now, however, it serves just as well to confirm that offhand sexuality, just like carnal vanity, is of necessity followed by death.

3. Fear Death by Water: Hell, Desert, Death

Misused, abused, and disordered, the waters of Leman cause the waters of life to dry up, and water itself becomes an arid, lethal, or infernal element. Immediately following the springtime fertility and sensuality of rain, hyacinths, and a young girl with wet hair, "Oed und leer das Meer" (Eliot 1956: 28, ln. 42) is quite striking. This is a citation from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Act III, when Tristan is dying and waiting for Isolde to come sailing to him, but all he hears from the watch is "Waste and empty is the sea" (Abrams 1962: 2268). Sexual love brings no new life, but instead turns water into a desert, "waste" and arid.

Life in the "Unreal City" becomes "life-in-death" and turns the Thames into a river of Hell:

> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
> I had not thought death had undone so many.
> Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
> And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
> (Eliot 1956: 29, ln. 61–65)

This is a direct allusion to the region of Dante's *Inferno* in which souls indifferent to good and evil are doomed to spend a gloomy eternity. Hell is here evoked by an image of a flow of humans over the flowing river. A bridge or a body of water is, we may recall, often crossed to enter the land of the dead in myth.

Water leads to death, symbolic or real, and drowning is repeatedly mentioned and alluded to in the poem. Death by water is, however, surprisingly not shown as offering any real horror to those that must suffer it, and there are no violent seas in *The Waste Land*, which is quite surprising for a myth-inspired poem, containing all the stages of a symbolic water journey, and otherwise inundated with water. It may come as somewhat of a relief to discover that Pound is in fact to be blamed for this state of affairs, as it was he who excised the originally existent shipwreck scene from the MS. He may well have been right to do so. The storm description is admittedly weak, unconvincing, slow, and sluggish: Eliot was apparently not at his best when depicting storms and violent sea-death. There are several exceptions to the generally flat description:

> 'I'll see a dead man in an iron coffin,
> 'With a crowbar row from here to Hell, before
> 'This vessel sail to windward.'
> So the crew moaned; the sea with many voices
> Moaned all about us, under a rainy moon.
> (Valerie Eliot 1971: 57)

This is by far the most dramatic and interesting part, but the stench of the canned baked beans that follows is perhaps described with more dramatic emphasis. Another noble attempt at depicting the fury of the sea is:

> We ate slept drank
> Hot coffee, and kept watch, and no one dared
> To look into anothers face, or speak
> In the horror of the illimitable scream
> Of a whole world about us.

Again, this falls somewhat flat, and hot coffee does rather spoil the atmosphere.

> One night
> On watch, I thought I saw in the fore cross-trees
> Three women leaning forward, with white hair,
> Streaming behind, who sang above the wind
> A song that charmed my senses, while I was
> Frightened beyond fear, horrified past horror, calm.
> (Valerie Eliot 1971: 59)

These are apparently meant to be sirens, but they are not truly the perilous sea-creatures they are wont to be, by no means cause a wreck, and sound quite old and in no way alluring.

Eliot's correspondence with Pound shows him, after the shipwreck scene was mercilessly excised, resignedly offering to omit Phlebas as well. Pound replied categorically: "Phlebas is an integral part of the poem; the card pack introduces him, the drowned phoen. sailor. And he is needed ABSOlootly where he is. Must stay in" (Cox and Hincliffe 1968: 25).

Phlebas primarily represents the lustral death by water in the poem. This may not be blatantly obvious from the few lines that Pound deigned to leave in Part IV of *The Waste Land*, but it becomes much clearer when we read the poems, published and unpublished, that contributed to its final version. "The Death of St. Narcissus", in two unpublished versions, shares more than just the line "Come under the shadow of this grey rock" with *The Waste Land*. St. Narcissus "walked first between the sea and the high cliffs", on a straight and narrow path. "When he walked over the meadows / He was stifled and carried apart / By the river", which seems here again to signify the temptations of flesh. "So because he was struck mad by the knowledge of his own beauty / He could not live men's ways, but became a dancer to God", and "So he came out to live under the rock" (Valerie Eliot 1971: 91). The solidity of the rock, symbolizing Christ, the Church, and the discipline of ascesis, guards against the fluidity of passions and shifting worldly experience. "First he was sure he had been a tree" then "a fish", and

> Then he had been a young girl
> Caught in the woods by a drunken old man
> Knowing at the end the taste of her own whiteness
> The horror of her own smoothness,
> And he felt drunken and old.
>
> So he became a dancer to God.
> Because his flesh was in love with the burning arrows
> He danced on the hot sand
> Until the arrows came.
> As he embraced them his white skin surrendered
> itself to the redness of blood, and satisfied him.
> Now he is green, dry and stained
> With the shadow in his mouth. (Valerie Eliot 1971: 97)

Eliot's St. Narcissus, which Comley believes was taken from Eusebius, was a bishop of Jerusalem in the 2nd century. Having been slandered, he went to the deserts to lead a life of strict ascesis, but was in fact not a martyr. St. Narcissus is in the poem merged with the Narcissus of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, who attracts both sexes, trifles with the love of both, and is finally doomed to fall in love with his own reflected image, which caus-

es him to drown (Comley 1979: 282–284). What is added to the merged image of Ovid's and Eusebius' Narcissus is, interestingly enough, the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, now a ubiquitous homoerotic icon. The phallic arrows which Narcissus' flesh is in love with are unmistakably sexual, but death is what finally quenches sexual passion.

Narcissus, just like Tiresias, and perhaps Eliot, has experienced romantic encounters with both sexes that apparently necessitate weariness, ennui, and the lustral death of martyrdom. Writing on Eliot's long-standing obsession with martyrdom that brings purification, expiation, and transformation, in relation to "The Death of St. Narcissus", Gordon also mentions "Dirge" as another symptom of that obsession, describing it as "a fantasy of Bleistein's frightful disembodiment under the sea". In this poem, "death by water" is quite "a drastic means of eliminating an unwanted identity" (Gordon 1974: 560–561). The "sea-change" of "Dirge" is rather graphic, unlike Phlebas' peaceful shedding of carnal passions, quite aggressive to poor old Bleistein, and does not appear to be as successful:

> Full fathom five your Bleistein lies
> Under the flatfish and the squids.
> Graves' Disease in a dead jew's eyes!
> When the crabs have eat the lids.
> Lower than the wharf rats dive
> Though he suffer a sea-change
> Still expensive rich and strange. (Valerie Eliot 1971: 119–121)

Of all the animals mentioned here, contributing to the very concrete, bodily, and sordid image of decomposition, only rats remain in *The Waste Land* as signifiers of death, always appearing in conjunction with "mere" dead bones. Another, untitled draft of the same poem contains the sea-change line from Ariel's song that will eventually find its place in *The Waste Land*, but here it is again followed by the repulsive, animalistic image of death: "Those are pearls that were his eyes. See! / And the crab clambers through his stomach, the eel grows big". This hostility towards human flesh might be partly explained by the line that follows: "Still and quiet brother are you still and quiet" (Valerie Eliot 1971: 123). Eliot's version of purifying death by water seems to have originally included quite a passionate, aggressive wish for the forceful tranquilizing of lustful flesh, including the complete obliteration of all that is beauty, wealth, and life.

A stanza very similar to the final version of death by water in *The Waste Land* appears first in "Dans le Restaurant", and its context is significant, as death by water here quenches sexuality, but this sexuality, as has been noted, is also represented by water in this very poem.

> Phlébas, le Phénicien, pendant quinze jours noyé,
> Oubliait les cris des mouettes et la houle de Cornouaille,
> Et les profits et les pertes, et la cargaison d'étain:

> Un courant de sous-mer l'emporta très loin,
> Le repassant aux étapes de sa vie antérieure.
> Figurez-vous donc, c'était un sort pénible;
> Cependant, ce fut jadis un bel homme, de haute taille.
> (Eliot 1936: 51–52)

Suffering very few changes, this became:

> Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
> Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
> And the profit and loss
> A current under sea picked his bones in whispers
> As he rose and fell
> He passed the stages of his age and youth
> Entering the whirlpool (Eliot 1956: 39, ln. 312–318)

Phlebas experiences "total recall at the point of death" and it is "a sailors' superstition that this always happens to the drowning" (Bradbrook 1972: 13). All this is much gentler than what Bleistein is subjected to. Part IV closes with the comparatively gentle *memento mori* of "Gentile or Jew / O you who turn the wheel and look to windward, / Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you" (Eliot 1956: 39, ln. 319–321). There is no ill will towards Phlebas here, unlike poor Bleistein, or even Phlébas, who was, after all, "un sort pénible" and a dirty old lecher. The only earthly passion of Phlebas seems to have been the reckoning of "the profit and loss", and he seems to be divested of that relatively painlessly.

Death by water in the final version of the poem brings peace. The poem, Eliot once said, was merely the "relief of a wholly personal and insignificant grouse against life" (Bradbrook 1972: 15). The final version of the poem's depiction of death by water, compared to those that came before, actually shows that Eliot had managed to significantly tame his "grouse" by the time *The Waste Land* was written. Water comes to be seen as "a symbol of surrender and relief through surrender" (Brooks 1968: 76), and no longer a punitive purge for wicked humanity. Phlebas is mercifully "released from the tension of the human world of cities, noises, and sexuality" (Gish 1988: 83).

4. Those Are Pearls that Were His Eyes: Treasure, Sea-change, Knowledge

Does Phlebas' drowning guarantee him the transformation, purification, and regeneration of a "sea-change"? He certainly undergoes a transformation, being divested of his persona and his passions. Purification seems to follow both martyrdom and contact with lustral water in Eliot's world. St. Narcissus is cleansed by the burning arrows, and the dirty waiter in "Dans le Restaurant" in sent for a bath. Ritual washing is

suggested by the line "*Et O ces voices d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*" (Eliot 1956: 35, ln. 202) from Verlaine's *Parsifal*, as Wagner's Parsifal had his feet washed before entering the castle of the Grail.

Rebirth may not be as unambiguously attainable in *The Waste Land*. Madame Sosostris does "not find / The Hanged Man" (Eliot 1956: 29, ln. 54–55), who primarily represents Christ, his death and resurrection, and thus she cannot embrace death by water either, because she cannot see that it leads to rebirth. She warns "against death by water, not realizing any more than do the other inhabitants of the modern waste land that the way into life may be by death itself" (Brooks 1968: 64). The drowned Phoenician Sailor she sees is a type of the fertility god Adonis whose effigy was thrown into the sea or springs as burial annually, and whose resurrection was to bring new life to the land (Frazer 1993: 335). The supposed drownings of Alonso and Ferdinand, alluded to in the poem, are likewise understood to have brought them transformation and a renewed life. Ritual death and burial seem to warrant rebirth, as Stetson is asked: "That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (Eliot 1956: 29, ln. 71–72). These lines are reminiscent of Christ's parable of the seed that must die, be buried and decompose, in order to truly begin its life.

Christ is the ultimate hero of the ultimate Death and Resurrection story. Leavis asserts that the beginning of part V unmistakably describes Christ, but "not only Christ; it is also the Hanged God and all the sacrificed gods: with the 'thunder of spring' 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris' and all the others of *The Golden Bough* come in" (Leavis 1962: 94). "All the others", of course, are meant to rise after their deaths, and bring water and fertility to the land back with them when they do. Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection beget new life for all Creation, and Gish notes that "the 'reverberation' of the quake that shook the earth when Jesus died merges into the sound of thunder that promises rain" (Gish 1988: 92–93). Headings thoroughly explores the different but parallel death-and-resurrection motifs running through the poem:

> The over-all shape of the poem is an analogous structure having parallels in the Year-god ceremonies; the maiming and eventual healing of the Fisher King; the burial and resurrection of Christ and of the Christian in baptism; the supposed drowning of Ferdinand's father, King Alonso, in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, which eventuates in a real psychic resurrection for him; Dante's descent into hell, which eventually leads up through purgatory to the earthly paradise as a prelude to his ascent to paradise; the stealing of the Rhine-gold treasure in Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs* tetralogy, eventually returned to its rightful place; and the liberation from lust of Arnaut Daniel's purgation by fire, of Buddha's 'Fire Sermon,' and of the 'Thunder Sermon' from which Eliot takes the three commands Give, Sympathize, and Control. Each of these involves a death-and-resurrection sequence; each of them, be it noted, implies an awareness of positive potentialities growing out of the initial waste and barren condition. (Headings 1964: 61–62)

Christ, Adonis, Phlebas, Alonso, and Ferdinand are all associated via the death-and-rebirth pattern. The connection of all to the questing protagonist is effected through Madame Sosostris' Tarot reading, when he is told that his card is "the drowned Phoenician Sailor / (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)" (Eliot 1956: 28, ln. 47–48). The second line is taken from Ariel's song, which serves as the type of successful sea-change in the poem:

> Full fadom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones are corals 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.
> (Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, I.ii.397–402)

Eliot had very different images of sea-changes in other poems, quoted above. Death by water in *The Waste Land* comes closest to that in *The Tempest*, and Phlebas' peaceful shedding of his persona and his passions resembles a true sea-change more than does the mere "frightful disembodiment" of the previous poems. However, Stetson gives no reply, and we never really see Phlebas resurrected. The appearance of the hooded figure in part V of the poem seems to indicate that Christ, at least, has certainly risen from the dead and can be found on the road to Emmaus.

Eliot's choice of the line "Those are pearls that were his eyes" as a token for Ariel's song and the entire concept of sea-change is far from accidental. It connects the typically Eliotesque expiation of lust through death, the sea-change of death by water, and the finding of sea-treasure by submersion into the depths. Eyes, human and carnal as they are naturally given, are traditionally associated with lust. Christ said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (*The Holy Bible*, Matthew 5: 27–28). Lustful eyes are to be sacrificed: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (*The Holy Bible*, Matthew 5: 29). Pearls, on the other hand, are a persistently positive image in the Bible, a symbol of the heavenly kingdom, for which all else should be forgone: "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (*The Holy Bible*, Matthew 13: 45–46). Drew claims that the transformation of eyes into pearls is "the central symbol in the poem of for the whole process of metamorphosis", as "Ariel's song reminds us of a supposed death by drowning which in reality led to a regeneration through 'sea change,' and a metamorphosis

from blindness to new vision" (Drew 1973: 72). The same happens with the once lustful Tiresias, who suffers physical blindness but is rewarded with a new, prophetic vision.

Apart from the pearls of transformation and new vision, the treasure to be found by submersion into the life-threatening water is the much needed life-giving water. Phlebas, buried at sea like Adonis, is to bring water and fertility back to the land. By association, the hero whose card is the drowned Phoenician Sailor and who is told to fear death by water, also suffers a ritual death when he forgoes passional water and seeks the water of life in a dry, desert, mountainous region. Phlebas' shedding of passions is on a par with the protagonist's asceticism.

Seeking water in a dry place actually makes symbolic sense, as Christ the Rock is also Christ the fountain of life-giving water. Isaiah's prophecy claims of Him that "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 a shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (*The Holy Bible*, Isaiah 32: 2). This verse prophetically links the line at the beginning of *The Waste Land*, "There is shadow under this red rock" (Eliot 1956: 27, ln. 25), with its fulfillment at the end, when it is among rocks that water is sought after. Motola notes that the poem's protagonist, "finding nothing but death in life both in the city and by the river, finally climbs to the mountains where, like Moses, he learns what he must strive to do to achieve salvation". It is also for Moses, we might recall, that God arranges for water to flow from a dry rock for the thirsty people he is leading through the desert. Motola goes on to claim that "the asceticism which the thunder of the mountains preaches" is "contradicted by the line 'In the mountains, there you feel free' in the first paragraph of the poem" (Motola 1969: 67). There is no reason to assume that the very asceticism of the mountains should not be liberating, but Marie chooses to eschew it, by going south in the winter.

Marie, who feels free in the mountains, is associated with the Lady of the Rocks from Madame Sosostris' Tarot card. The Lady of the Rocks is the name of Da Vinci's painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is traditionally the bestower of the waters of life and protector from the waters of death. The painting depicts Her with the Child and St. John the Baptist among dry, rocky mountains, but with a stream of water in the background. The Lady of the Rocks is also referred to by Madame Sosostris as the "lady of situations" and Belladonna, which denotes both a beautiful woman and a lethal poison, and both appellations serve to ambiguate this figure. She ultimately seems to represent both of Still's types of Woman and Water: the Wanton Woman or the bittersweet, passional water, and the Immaculate Woman or the life-giving water of God (Tamplin 1967: 359). Christ as the Rock and the water of life, Lady of the Rocks as the guardian of waters, the water flowing from the rock for Moses and his people in the desert: all these coalesce in the image of the hero seeking water among the dry rocks.

Is the water of life ultimately found? The quester for the Grail, reaching his destination, must usually conquer a terrifying and fiendish opponent, ask the right questions, or perform a fertility ritual to restore water to the dry land. When the protagonist of *The Waste Land* reaches his destination, all he sees is that "There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home" (Eliot 1956: 42, ln. 388). What takes place in the chapel and why it is empty is a matter of some debate. Peter optimistically asserts that the protagonist finds nothing to fear in the chapel, because, being one of the disciples, only shame is left for him at the cowardice of renouncing Christ. However, he is forgiven, and, "as the cock that reproved Peter falls silent, there comes 'a damp gust' of the wind that he has waited for, bringing relief at last. The Hero, Christ, has achieved the feat of 'Freeing the Waters' and now the thunder is heard through the falling rain" (Peter 1969: 162). This is a tidy and pleasing interpretation, but it must be noted that "a damp gust / Bringing rain" (Eliot 1956: 42, ln. 393–394) is simply not yet rain. Bowra pessimistically claims that the chapel is empty because modern life "offers no final and decisive struggle, no hard ordeal, no test of real worth", and can be "revived neither by finance nor by sex nor by adventure. It has no fierce struggle with evil, but continues as before, unredeemed and barren". Consequently, the message of the thunder "fails, and the poem ends with the Fisher King sitting on the shore and asking when new life will come to him. The various efforts have ended in defeat and failure, and all goes on as before" (Bowra 1949: 172–173). It has also been suggested that the emptiness of the chapel signifies nothing more than "the moment of near despair before the Chapel Perilous, when a questing knight sees nothing there but decay. This illusion of nothingness is the knight's final test" (Abrams 1962: 2281). The only thing that can be claimed with certainty is that *The Waste Land* is deliberately ambiguous on whether the quest is successful and whether rain eventually comes.

The treasure water certainly does yield in *The Waste Land* is, interestingly enough, the means to control it. The line "This music crept by me upon the waters" (Eliot 1956: 37, ln. 257) is taken from Ferdinand's reaction to Ariel's song in *The Tempest*:

> Sitting on a bank,
> Weeping again the King my father's wrack
> This music crept by me upon the waters
> Allaying both their fury and my passion
> With its sweet air. (Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, I.ii.390–394)

Music is here what controls and restrains both the fury of the passional waters and the passions of the heart, symbolically equating the two, and this is what the waste land also desperately needs, perhaps even more than life-giving water itself. The verse is followed in *The Waste Land* by a rarely pleasing image of past order:

O City City, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
And a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishermen lounge at noon. (Eliot 1956: 37, ln. 259–263)

London fishermen of past times established a healthy and orderly balance, symbolized here by music, between work and rest, which both seemed to involve the vicinity of water.

Weston, insisting on the fish as an ancient life symbol, claims that "the title of Fisher has, from the earliest ages, been associated with Deities who were held to be specially connected with the origin and preservation of Life" (Weston 1920: ch. 9). Christianity added to fishing the dimension of spiritual salvation, as Jesus said to Peter and Andrew: "I will make you fishers of men" (*The Holy Bible*, Matthew 4:19). Fishing, the noble activity of retrieving the treasure of life from watery depths, plays an important role in the poem, but it is again uncertain whether it actually brings any regeneration to those that pursue it in the waste land. The Fisher King is seen "fishing in the dull canal" and, once more, sitting on the shore, "Fishing, with the arid plain behind me / Shall I at least set my land in order?" (Eliot 1956: 43, ln. 423–425). We are not allowed to know whether there is anything on the end of the fishing line, and the plain certainly is still arid, but what fishing again seems to retrieve from the depths is the knowledge of the necessity of order.

5. The Hand Expert with Sail and Oar: Restraint, Control, Order

It is a commonplace of any colonial age that contact with "primitive" life may invigorate, and for Trotter at least, *The Waste Land* is a journey, beginning in London, "the dead heart of the system", and ending "on the frontier", where new life can be found to regenerate the desiccated civilization (Trotter 1986: 146). While I see the mountains of *The Waste Land* as the symbol of asceticism, not barbaric life, I agree that it is "primitive" passions that are mostly associated with fluidity and vitality in the poem, though this water is the contaminated water that follows a flood. These "barbaric" passional waters must be controlled by sailing them expertly, in order not to drown in them. In the MS., Eliot extols the virtues of sailors: "A sailor, attentive to the chart or to the sheets, / A concentrated will against the tempest and the tide, / Retains, even ashore, in public bars or streets / Something inhuman, clean and dignified" (Valerie Eliot 1971: 55). Two distinct forces seem to be pitted against each other here: the chaotic force of water, passion, and human carnality, and the orderly force of dry spirit and will, that is seen as inhuman. Sailing the chaotic waters of life means taming the primitive passions that are inevitably the lot of humanity. Spender contrasted to the barbarism in Conrad's *Heart*

of Darkness, which inspired *The Waste Land*, Eliot's image of "a ship responding to the hand on a tiller as a symbol of achieved love and of civilization" (Spender 1975: 117). The controlling hands are, however, more than "love" and "civilization".

What is "restraint" in *Heart of Darkness*, the "*Damyata*" of the thunder's message is in *The Waste Land*, and more:

> The boat responded
> Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
> The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
> Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
> To controlling hands. (Eliot 1956: 43, ln. 418–422)

Sigg believes that the "control" of *Damyata* must for Eliot mean primarily self-control, and corroborates this by citing his grandfather Rev. Eliot's sermon on the necessity of "the lesson of self-control […] so early learned that it becomes like the alphabet of life" (Sigg 1994: 18). For Bodkin, "control" means renunciation, surrender, submission to divine control, and she contrasts it with Tristan and Isolde's "selfish passion", connecting the two through the boat image (Bodkin 1965: 314). Other "selfish passions" effected through boats are also alluded to here, most notably the contrast between Elizabeth and Leicester "beating" oars and the heart "beating obedient" to controlling hands. The boat is here, as it were, redeemed as an image, being controlled by the hand expert with sail and oar, and no longer the means of temptation.

The fact that even the sea is calm indicates that both self-control and divine control are necessary for the sailing to go smoothly, as a sailor can only control his boat, but water itself must be commanded from above.

The true water of life is missing from Eliot's waste land, and it is instead flooded with sullied, passional water, which can offer only unwanted, banal vitality. Existent water is associated with sordid sexual sin and repulsive women, and is almost exclusively arid, infernal and lethal. This dirtied state necessitates lustral death, which is again effected through water. Death by water brings peace, purification, transformation, and possibly regeneration. The protagonist of the poem finally searches for the water of life among dry rocks and mountains, which symbolize asceticism. While it is uncertain whether the water of life is eventually found, the most valuable treasure that the existent water does yield is the knowledge of the necessity of controlling it. This ordering of the chaos of water is represented by the images of music, fishing, and sailing.

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Даница Игрутиновић

Да је само воде: симболизам воде у Пустој Земљи

Резиме

У раду се предлаже тумачење једне од кључних поема модернизма, *Пуста земља* Т. С. Елиота, у светлу идеја које су не само опстајале кроз модернизам него су га и стварале. Полазиште интерпретације чини митологија воде као темељно но ипак непостојано и промењиво Друго, присутно на основном нивоу света коме даје животну снагу, истовремено остајући под утицајем горње и надређене, контролишуће и цивилизаторске, силе.

Модернистичка митологија воде има као основу древни наратив katabasis/nekyia, ноћно путовање кроз воду до Ада и назад. Ово путовање почиње прогонством из рационалног, цивилизованог, стабилног света, и наставља се кроз силазак у ирационалне, флуидне дубине подсвести и *prima materiae*. У подводном паклу / аду, јунак се суочава са воденим чудовиштем које по правилу чува благо и убија јунака, ипак допуштајући његово васкрсење, након чега јунак односи благо и враћа се на површину.

Кључне речи: Пуста земља, Т. С. Елиот, модернизам, мит/религија/филозофија, сексуалност/род, katabasis/nekyia

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