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**MOTIFS OF FOUR ELEMENTS IN T.S. ELIOT'S *THE
WASTE LAND***

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 28. 6. 2012

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is focused on interpretation of possible meanings of the classical elements-connected metaphors, allusions and symbols in the T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. This work offers summary of different interpretations from literary experts and critics from different sources and time periods while at the same time contains original thoughts and interpretations by the author.

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na interpretaci možných významů metafor, literárních odkazů a symbolů spojených s klasickými živly v Básni T.S. Eliota *The Waste Land*. Práce nabízí souhrn mnoha různých interpretací literárních expertů a kritiků z rozmanitých zdrojů, a zároveň původní myšlenky a výklad autora této práce.

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Introduction

Thomas Stearns Eliot was writer, literary and social critic, playwright but most notably of all these, he was a poet and master of the craft in his era. The poem that made his name well known, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, published in 1915, is regarded as a crucial piece of literature establishing the Modernist movement.

His magnum opus however, the poem that will be analyzed in this thesis, *The Waste Land*, came out 7 years later in 1922. It is arguably one of the most important poems in 20th century and it became one of the most recognized and familiar pieces of not only English, but also world literature.

In the following lines, I would like to make reader familiar with the basis of the important composition history of the poem and foreshadow the content of this thesis as a whole, the method which was used to analyze the poem and a composition of individual chapters.

The ingenious poet worked on the manuscript for what was to become one of the most recognized pieces of literature for at least few years before it was published. Some passages date as far back as 1914, first part was probably written in its entirety by 1919. The bulk of the work and finishing of the manuscript seems to date back to the period from November 1921 to January 1922. At the time Eliot was on leave from the Lloyds Bank to recover from a case of nervous breakdown. After staying at Margate for month he spent most of the rest of his leave at Lausanne where he underwent treatment by Dr. Roger Vittoz at a clinic there. Ezra Pound reported that „Eliot came back from his Lausanne specialist looking OK; and with damn good poem (19 pages) in his suitcase“ (qtd. in Southam p. 166) In the spring of 1922, Eliot sent his 19 pages long manuscript to Ezra Pound, who was at the time living in Paris. Later that year, two giants of Modernism met to edit the manuscript into its final version. Although Eliot edited some parts of the poem himself, most significant cuts were due to Pound's suggestions and guidance. The original contained almost twice as much material as the final printed version did.

At the time of its first publication, critical reception of *The Waste Land* was, to say the least, mixed. Some critics immediately considered it to be a work of a literary genius, while others thought it was in the best case difficult and esoteric and in the worst one disjointed pile of rubbish. Its phenomenal range of cultural, linguistic and literary allusions, hidden meanings and sometimes disarray of imagery is certainly worth admiration. It also

makes modern reader of the internet age, when desired information is literally click of a button away wonder, how amazing and difficult it must have been for the readers of the time to read and moreover understand this poem.

The Waste Land has been turned upside down and inside out by qualified literary experts and critics through the 20th and 21st century. In figurative speech it is almost in place to say that the interpretation of the themes in the poem was done to death. While most of the critics and interpreters concentrate on the unclear and complicated issues such as religion, social mechanics and relations between individuals and cultures, it is amazing how Eliot is able to use such a common substances as water, flames, wind and soil and forge them into the most puzzling and complex metaphors.

So rather than crafting another inventory of allusions throughout the poem, this work will solely focus on the interpretation of metaphors and allusions connected to the four natural elements. The goal of this work is to demonstrate, that even the most simplistic and everyday substances can be used in such an amazing way, that they not only countervail such concepts as a religion, clash of cultures or spiritual, emotional and intellectual properties, but moreover, the symbolism of elements often surpasses such concepts and sometimes can even include them.

The thesis consists of seven parts. In the first part, reader will be familiarized with the concept of classical elements, as well as with the properties of each individual element. Also the first part presents the two main points of view on the concept, Western or Greek tradition and Buddhist tradition, which are both equally important to understanding and interpretation of individual metaphors and allusions in the poem.

Next five parts are dedicated respectively to the individual parts of the poem: The Burial of the Dead , A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water and What the Thunder Said. It was difficult to decide for the method of interpretation or, in better words, how to process the analysis. In the end, it seemed unwise to divide each part into additional four parts each dedicated to the single element. At the end, I decided , because of highly fragmental and rather complex nature of the poem and it's lack of structural unity to interpret the poem as it goes. So whenever there's mentioned some allusion or metaphor or symbol bounded to individual (or sometimes into multiple) elements, it is interpreted immediately. Due to this division, I would advise the reader to have a copy of *The Waste Land* at hand while reading through the work for quick cross reference. Also please note,

that each fragment of the poem will be separated by double space, so the work will be clearer for the reader and easier to cross reference with the poem itself.

In the last part of this work, the reader can find evaluation and closing thoughts of the thesis. It will inspect ratio of the element-bounded metaphors and symbols, as well as summarize individual meanings of each element and compare one to another.

Background on Classical Elements

The notion of four or five classical elements is the basic idea of many worldviews, philosophies and even religions. The set of classical elements usually reflects the simplest essential parts and (or) principles, which everything in existence consists of and its fundamental powers and properties are based on. In most of ancient cultures, four basic elements appear: air, fire, earth and water. These are often accompanied by the fifth element or quintessence, which differs in individual cultures. In western tradition it is Aether, in the Buddhist teaching it's element of Space, in Indian tradition it's Void. Chinese had completely different set of elements, which they interpreted as a "metamorphoses of being" rather than basic substances. They represent different types of energy in a state of constant interaction with one another. These are: Water, Earth, Fire, Wood and Metal, sometimes accompanied by Qi.

Since in *The Waste Land* Eliot mixes Christian (Western) tradition and Buddhist mythology, this work will concentrate on the four elements both philosophies have in common: Air, Fire, Earth and Water.

The concept itself in Western culture originates from Babylonian mythology. The ancient text *Enûma Eliš*, which originates from in between 18th and 16th century BC, describes the creation of the world from five elements: sea, earth, fire, sky and wind.

The tradition was, however, best established by Greek philosophers. This division persisted during the Middle Ages and through the Renaissance to the present day in our Western tradition. The elements originate from the list created by the Sicilian philosopher Empedocles (ca. 450 BC), who called them the four roots. Plato was the first one to use the word element. The Greek equivalent stoicheion meant the smallest division or syllable, and in the relation to linguistics it could also denote the letters of the alphabet, as the smallest dividable part of the words.

Aristotle later added the fifth element Aether, reasoning that the four basic elements were material and therefore corruptible, and since there are no obvious changes observed in the heavenly objects, there has to be a fifth eternal and unchangeable heavenly substance. Also in Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption*, he devised the Hellenic physics diagram, which was and in modern Esoteric still continues to be the key to assigning the secondary properties to four basic elements. These secondary properties are states of being: hot, cold, dry and wet.

The Buddhism has entirely different take on the subject on elements. Rather than considering them materials, early Buddhist texts interpret the elements as the abstract sensory qualities solidity, fluidity, temperature, and mobility, with earth, water, fire, and air, representing them respectively. These elements are key to understand and way to liberate oneself from suffering.

Also, in the Buddhist tradition, elements are described as both external (outside of the body, for example river) and internal (inside of the body, for example blood).

Air is often seen as a universal power or pure substance. Ancient Greek medicine connected each element to one of four basic humors (bodily fluid influencing health and character), and the one connected to air was blood, because blood is both hot and wet. Person dominated by the blood humor has the temperament of sanguine, which Ross describes as being primarily “sturdy, confident, optimistic, cheerful, happy”(Sec. III). The basic physical sign of air is wind. The color associated with air is yellow. Astrological signs associated with air are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius. Other things and symbols connected to wind throughout history to modern days are: the season of spring, death and spirits.

In the Buddhist tradition, internal functions of air are associated with breathing and intestines.

All of the elements are substantial for life, however air is considered the most important, because the human body can function several days without water, heat or food, however only few minutes without the air.

Fire is regarded as essence of life and is granted the power of transformation. Humor connected to fire is Yellow bile, since both are hot and dry. The characteristics of choleric character, which is the personality of the person dominated by Yellow bile are as follows: “angry, irate, irascible” (Ross, Sec. III). The basic physical sign of fire is flame. The color associated with fire is red. Signs of the zodiac fire sections are Aries, Leo and Sagittarius. Other connections include season of summer, masculine quality, destruction but also passion.

Buddhism connects fire to those bodily mechanisms that produce physical warmth, aging and digestion.

While the fire isn't substantial for life itself, it is important part of all cultures and religions, since it is vital to development of civilization.

Earth is commonly associated with qualities of heaviness and solid matter. Bodily fluid associated with earth is Black bile being both cold and dry. Personality of black bile is called melancholic, meaning "depressed, tending to depress the spirits, irascible, sad, saddening." (Ross, Sec. III) Also it is connected to season of fall, feminine quality and fertility. The basic physical sign of earth is soil or rock. Colors of earth are brown and green. People born under astrological signs of Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn are thought to have dominant earth personalities.

Internal functions in Buddhism include hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, bone, organs and basically everything material that the body consists of.

The earth is supposedly second most important element to sustain life together with water, because it presents the mankind (and all living organisms) with the food and quality of life space (which is in Buddhist tradition separated as its own element).

Water posses the quality of purity. In modern esoteric tradition it is also representation of emotion and intuition. Humor of water is Phlegm, for they both posses the qualities of being cold and wet. The personality dominated by Phlegm is called phlegmatic, and as such is the person "slow, stolid, cool, impassive." (Ross, Sec. III) The basic physical sign of the water is fluid. Water colors are blue, but also black and gray. Water signs in astrology are Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces. Other associations include season of winter, the brain, and renewal.

Buddhists connect water with bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, nasal mucus and urine.

Water, together with earth, is the second most important element for life. It is also the most important symbol of Christianity, it is substantial for making the holy water and baptizing infants. Also the most prominent symbol of Christianity besides the cross – the fish – strongly suggests water element.

It is interesting, how title of each part of the poem corresponds or suggests the ritual connected with each of the element: burial of the dead is considered to be universal ceremony connected with earth in all cultures and even in pagan religions and fertility cults. The fire sermon is Buddha's teaching how to achieve enlightenment by blocking all temptations of the senses. Death by water could mean the twisted metaphor for baptism, while thunder is universally considered to be phenomenon which falls within the air

domain.

In every system there is always the fifth element, but its interpretation differs in canons. For what it seems, Eliot creates his own canon in *The Waste Land* and it can be argued what the fifth element is. However, based on the interpretation of the second's part title, A Game of Chess, the fifth element in the canon of *The Waste Land* is destiny.

There are countless interpretations of what the destiny is. It may be thought of as a predetermined chain of events, which defines the future of an individuals or whole world. There are many instances in *The Waste Land* when fate or destiny plays major parts, most notably in the epigraph and in the third fragment of the first part.

The Burial of the Dead

In the first part of the poem, mentioning of earth appears very soon. Right in the first fragment, the April breeds lilacs out of dead land. The author suggests that the metaphorical land, which could cover anything really, from his own imagination in local measure to common grounds of social and emotional relationships in global measure, is dead and therefore infertile. April also stirs dull roots with a spring rain, which sounds actually very fresh and stands here in opposition to the dull roots. While the connection of the words seems interesting, to say the least, there is one even more eye-catching nearby and that is “April is the cruellest month, ... ”(1). Many critics and experts see this line as a kind of spoof, parody or satire of the opening of the Canterbury tales, where April is described as fruit-bearing and flower-siring birth-giver to the spring. To Eliot, April may seem as a scavenger, picking the carrion of the dead life, killed by harsh winter, while using the spare parts to sprout a new one, feeding the little buds with “death tubers”.

As was mentioned above, the ground itself in this conceit is death – it represents nothing more than a husk of its supposed earlier fertile landscape, while the rain works in traditional symbolism of life-giving entity. However, Eliot suggests that the process of rebirth is more of a disgusting, borderline violent act, and it is up to the reader whether it should be celebrated, as more traditional poetry does.

Another mentioning of earth could be found in lines “Winter kept us warm, covering/Earth in forgetful snow, ...”(6-7). The placing of Earth in the beginning of the line and its capitalization is no coincidence and it is rather clever play on words from the author. In its non-capitalized form, it adds to the previous interpretation, where it could be debated what Eliot had in mind, should we consider Earth as a planet. Forgetful snow could be interpreted as a certain veil of apathy, which covers mankind, or at least western culture, as a whole. Also the change of seasons may bear hidden meaning. Can author by mentioning of winter refer us to the WWI, which kept us warm? Did the individuals felt the connection to one another via patriotism, similar to which travelers feel to one another while they meet in secluded cabins to hide from disfavor of weather and could the metaphorical summer wipe such feelings out?

Water-connected allusion could be also found in line 8 “Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee”. According to “A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot” Starnbergersee is: “A fashionable cosmopolitan lake-resort just south of Munich,

visited by Eliot in August 1911 ”. (p. 141)

Further research brought to my attention the fact, that King Ludwig II of Bavaria and his personal physician Bernhard von Gudden were found dead in the lake, murdered under mysterious circumstances in 1886.

At a first glance, it would seem that drowning of Ludwig II was the reason that Eliot decided to include the Starnbergersee into the poem. After all it could refer to “Death by water”, a phrase that is quoted or referred to many times through the poem (most notably in line 55 and in the title of part IV). But after some consideration a number of doubts appeared.

First and most importantly, in original draft Eliot wrote “Summer surprised us, coming over the Königssee ” but decided to change it into Starnbergersee in final version of the poem. It is possible that Eliot forgot the name of the lake he visited as a student and corrected it later. Another possibility is, that he wanted just good-sounding word for his poem and names of both lakes sound similar. However, it is also possible that he chose Königssee at random and later changed it into Starnbergersee intentionally based on its historical importance.

Secondly, there were severe doubts that Ludwig II drowned in the lake. Ludwig was known to have been a very strong swimmer in his youth, the water was approximately waist-deep where his body was found, and the official autopsy report indicated that no water was found in his lungs. Also his companion's body suffered blows to the head and neck and there were signs of strangulation around his neck. Additionally Jakob Lidl (king's personal fisherman and supposed eye-witness of king's murder) reported in his journal that the king was shot by the unknown assassin. Whatever the case was, we cannot know how deeply was Eliot familiar with the subject matter and he personally didn't add any notes to explain whether or not is the significance of Starnbergersee related to Ludwig's murder and whether Ludwig's murder bears any significance in connection to Death by Water. We can only guess.

In next fragment of the first part of the poem, „Burial of the dead“, the unspecified speaker asks “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow/ Out of this stony rubbish?...”(19-20) and later comments that “And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,/ And the dry stone no sound of water. Only/ There is shadow under this red rock”(23-25). In relation to the earth-bound metaphors, it is interesting how Eliot uses

“stones” and “rocks”. While rocks appear naturally, stones are rocks that have been worked by man for some use such as decoration, idols, weapons, building materials, and inscribed markers like grave stones. Concerning first two lines of the second fragment, Southam points out that “these are not direct Biblical allusions, but ‘roots’ and ‘branches’ are characteristic of its figurative language, as in ‘if the root be holy, so are the branches’ (Romans xi, 16). Likewise the ‘stony places’ (Mathew xiii, 5-6) where the ‘seed’ of faith springs up to be scorched in the sun and wither away.”(143). So hidden critical reception of Christianity offers itself. While Eliot could refer us to stony rubbish either as a metaphor of collapsed church or literal image of ruined cities, he questions the purpose and nature of the branches and clutching roots, which limit the human spirit/faith. Moreover in the following lines, the narrator comments that these trees (of faith?) are dead and they offer no salvation and no relief.

But what could be the meaning of the red rock in lines 23-25? Southam offers following explanation: “l.25: cf. Isaiah xxxii, 2, describing the blessings of Christ's kingdom: ‘And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind and covered from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.’ Fraser also mentions rocks, one of them called Red Altar, figuring as rain-charms.” (Southam 144). This supports the thesis of criticism of Christianity established above. The narrator sees the Christian mythology as an infertile desert, where only the red rock could bring the salvation and relief in form of rain. This rock, however, as pointed out above, is not man-made. Also it seems that narrator hides in its relieving shadow, and threatens the passer-by, by promising that he will show him some different shadow (death or change?) and a “fear in a handfull of dust”.

Water or, in better words, lack of it holds greater significance in the whole, rather than in single bounded allusions. Speaker describes wasteland as a “stony rubbish”, empty and dead desert without any consolation whatsoever “And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief / And the dry stone no sound of water.” (23, 24). Water here obviously works as a symbol of life, and lack of it means only death of all living things. Moreover As SparkNotes Editors point out: “The second episode contains a troubled religious proposition. ... he (speaker) says, man can recognize only “[a] heap of broken images.” Yet the scene seems to offer salvation: shade and a vision of something new and different. The vision consists only of nothingness—a handful of dust—which is so profound as to be frightening; yet truth also resides here: No longer a religious phenomenon achieved through

Christ, truth is represented by a mere void ” (SparkNotes Editors, Sec. I 3.3.4) . The absence of the godlike entity here is once again implied by shortage of water, which can summon image of baptism, Christianity, and the figure of Jesus Christ himself, due to strong Christian symbolism of fish and fisherman.

In the same fragment, there is section that could be interpreted differently. It is bordered by quotations of Wagner’s opera *Tristan und Isolde*. The lines in questions are 35-41.

Due to a composition and context, it seems that this part of the poem is the narrator himself remembering something that happened in the past. The reminiscent of the narrator’s past turns tone of the poem from bitter and apocalyptic desert to somehow melancholic, yet definitely fresher scene. “In contrast to the present setting in the desert, his memories are lush, full of water and blooming flowers. The vibrancy of the earlier scene, though, leads the speaker to a revelation of the nothingness he now offers to show the reader.” (SparkNotes Editors, Sec. I 3.3.4).

The most probable interpretation is that this part of the poem is Eliot himself remembering his close friend Jean Verdenal, who he met in Paris and maintained in contact via letters which they exchanged for several years. James E. Miller Jr. writes in “T. S. Eliot’s Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of the Demons”:

The only other public reference by Eliot to Jean Verdenal appeared some seventeen years after the *Prufrock* dedication, in the April 1934 issue of *The Criterion*, in the editor’s column, “A Commentary.” In browsing through a book (Henry Massis, *Evocations*, 1934) about Paris during the time that Eliot was a student at the Sorbonne there (1910-11), Eliot becomes steeped in romantic memories, and turns both autobiographical and confessional, as, in an aside, he says:

“I am willing to admit that my own retrospect is touched by a sentimental sunset, the memory of a friend coming across the Luxembourg Gardens in the late afternoon, waving a branch of lilac, a friend who was later (so far as I could find out) to be mixed with the mud of Gallipoli.”

This brief comment stands out with a remarkable brilliancy in the

brief “Commentary.” as it is the only genuinely personal note struck in what is essentially a reminiscence of the intellectual and literary milieu of Paris during Eliot’s year there a quarter of a century before. Although Jean Verdenal's name is not mentioned, there seems little doubt in view of the *Prufrock* dedication that he is the friend referred to. ” (pp. 18-19)

There is obvious argument against this theory, because the narrator's companion says “They called me the hyacinth girl”(35). However certain critics maintain convinced that the “hyacinth girl” is in fact a male figure. Let us inspect, why this figure of nymph, which is often personified mystical being of water (the figure has wet hair), is important to the poem and whether it is somehow connected to Eliot’s personal acquaintance.

First, the use of the noun hyacinth as an adjective is strange in itself, but even more strange is to use it as modification of a figure of female gender. According to the Greek mythology, Hyacinth was young boy, whose beauty caused the feud between the gods Apollo and Zephyrus. When Apollo and Hyacinth were throwing discs, god of wind Zephyrus, who was jealous because Hyacinth favored Apollo as his lover, set Apollo’s disc of the course, fatally injuring Hyacinth. Apollo did not allow Hades to claim the boy’s soul and rather made beautiful flowers sprout from his blood.

Second, in the original draft, the hyacinth garden is remembered again in lines 124-125, however the section was later deleted. In the original draft it goes “I remember / **the hyacinth garden.** Those are pearls that were his eyes, **yes!** ”(124-125) but the mentioning of the garden was cut. Nevertheless the lines mention the garden and “his eyes”, while the being in the garden called herself a girl.

Third, Ralph Waldo Emerson in his elegiac poem *Threnody* mourns his dead son and refers to him as the hyacinthine boy. The line 35 may be an allusion to this poem, if we consider that the narrator is mourning loss of his friend.

Finally, in the line 38 it is mentioned that “Your arms full, and your hair wet ...”. What was the “hyacinth girl” held in her arms? Careful reader certainly remembers Eliot’s comment on Verdenal waving branch of lilacs in the garden. Lilacs are also mentioned earlier in the poem and are (due to its shape) also a male symbol.

At last, in the second fragment, water holds hidden meaning in lines taken from Wagner’s opera, *Tristram und Isolde* “Frisch weht der Wind / Der Heimat zu / Mein Irisch

Kind, / Wo weilest du?"(31-34) . Translation of these lines is: "Fresh blows the wind / To the homeland / My Irish darling / Where do you linger? ". Parker suggest that meaning of these lines, where Tristram waits for Isolde coming by the ship but fails to arrive, represent desolation and emptiness of the sea, which holds no hope for Tristram to be healed. Also returning back to the fragment inserted between the lines, it could be lamentation for the friend fallen in World War I in Gallipoli Campaign.

In the third fragment, madame Sosostris comment on tarot cards. There are two of them concerning natural elements. First one is the drowned Phoenician sailor, which is allusion further to the poem – specifically Phlebas in the part IV. The drowned sailor here represents past hope for rebirth. Water is foreshadowed as a corrupted life symbol and continues to work as such until the last section of the poem. However madame Sosostris quotes this card by a fragment alluding to Ariel's song from *The Tempest* "(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)" (48). In the play the song continues by "Nothing of him that doth fade / But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange." Although the sailor had already drowned in the sea of hopelessness and despair, which the modern world is, there seems to be at least little hope of sea-change into something beautiful - the pearl.

Also madame Sosostris comments on this card later in the fragment by "... I do not find/ The Hanged Man. Fear death by water." (54-55). The author seems to be once again alluding other parts of the poem. Most obviously, 4th is part of the poem called Death by Water. However there are other scenes and allusions depicting watery deaths which will be analyzed later in this work. Drowning is recurring theme in *The Waste Land*, so we can assume that Eliot was either fascinated by it or was afraid of death in such a way. There are three other connections outside the poem which are also worth noting.

Could "Death by the Water" symbolize baptism in twisted metaphor (since baptism is considered by Christians to be your second and most significant birth) and therefore indicate Eliot's doubt about Christianity? Absence of the God-like figure is mentioned in the poem before and is substituted by nothingness, so death by water could symbolize stepping into the empty cosmos of faith hoping for salvation and finding none, just the proverbial modernist void.

Also, it is worth noting, that Ada Eliot, the sister of T.S. Eliot's father, drowned in a skating accident at the age of sixteen. The death by water could also refer to this event,

however it does not seem very probable.

And finally and most notably, returning to the Jean Verdenal who I mentioned above, death by water could refer to his demise during Gallipoli Campaign . “Eliot was never quite sure how he died, but "death by water" is a possible explanation since the battle occurred offshore. ”(Simpson)

The second card madame Sosostris draws from the deck is “... Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,/ The lady of situations.” (49-50). Supposedly this is one of three cards that are in actual tarot deck. Tarot expert Carole Pierce wrote in her essay on this particular phenomenon of *The Waste Land* “If we use Eliot’s clues, the Queen of Cups fits this card. This Queen holds out a Grail in seemingly benevolent way, and yet she is cut off from the seeker of her gifts by water and rocks. Again Eliot gives us a chance of renewal, but in a way that is fraught with peril.” So the rocks here work as a natural obstacle in humanity’s way to salvation.

In the last fragment of the first part there is mentioning of “...the brown fog of a winter dawn” (61). Brown is not usually the color we think of in connection with the fog. This could represent the Eliot’s disapproval of the modern industrialized cities. While the air should be clear and natural fog has the quality of white color, the brown fog is usually associated with unhealthy or decaying fumes, certainly not healthy to breath. Also, and this is purely from a modern reader standpoint of view, the brown color is connected with memories. In the Eliot’s time, modern silent films were done in the sepia-tones (due to the quality of contemporary film material and projection devices) more often than black and white we know today. So the brown fog may not necessarily mark the putrid quality of air, but rather add to the unreal atmosphere in which the narrator of this fragment meets the crowd of dead people mentioned in the paragraph bellow.

As it was foreshadowed, the focus of this fragment seems to be the crowd of death souls crossing the river: “A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,/I had not thought death had undone so many.”(62-63). Line 63 is of course allusion to Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* Canto III : “And after it there came so long a train/ Of people, that I ne'er would have believed /That ever Death so many had undone. ”(55-57). Also line 69 in *The Waste Land* : “There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying 'Stetson !'” is slightly similar to Dante's “When some among them I had recognized,/I looked, and I beheld the shade of him”(58-59). It is important to notice, that *Inferno* Canto III main focus is Dante crossing the river

Styx and arriving upon the shores of Acheron.

The act of crossing the river to the other side is well-known and established metaphor in the western culture and it usually refers to the Greek mythology, where the souls of the dead had to cross the river Styx via paying the ferrymen Charon. The water in the form of river Styx represent both the final obstacle that the dead have to cross to find the peace and the veil that divide the land of the dead and land of the living.

But unlike in Hades, there is no one to help the souls to cross the river in the “Unreal City”. However their way is facilitated by the bridge. This could mean, that Eliot saw the world of death firmly bounded to the world of living. Could it be because of massive life loss in the WWI or because the apocalyptic events that are foreseen in the final part of the poem? Or could it symbolize the acceptance/ignorance of the cataclysmic events by the modern man? Has death of “endless crowds” became such a common event, that we do not even notice it? Another explanation could be that the life and death are connected and all inhabitants of *The Waste Land* lead their lives in death – they are empty and spiritually dead. This should explain few other lines which seems out of context (most notably lines 40, 126, 328 and 329, where is reccuring theme of being alive or dead, or neither of those) These are questions worth asking, whether the author had them in mind while writing this part of the poem or not.

A game of Chess

The imagery of flames appears for the first time in the poem. “(where the glass....)Doubled the flames of seven-branched candelabra” (82). It doesn't seem that there are any direct metaphors or allusions connected directly to the flames themselves in this particular instance. Reading through Southam, one can find out that whole scene between lines 77 and 96 could be indirect allusion to Exodus xxv-xxvii where God gives Moses ridiculously elaborate instructions how to decorate Temple of Jerusalem, with golden chair set behind the table with seven-bracketed candelabrum. Bearing this in mind, the key to interpret this line is that the flames seem to be doubled by the glass. Therefore something of great importance, even of greater importance than setting a temple, must take place in the room. The title of this part solely reveals that the inhabitants of this room are to play a game of chess. So piecing together the clues, it could be interpreted as some god-figures, which are twice as important as God (symbolism of doubling flames, two cupidons, there are two persons in the room) are to play a game with the lives of mortals. However the game is not actually carried out in the rest of this part, so should we believe that the gods or fate-like entities turned their faces away from us?

Another mentioning of fire also appears in descriptive part 77-96 appears in lines 94-96: “Huge sea-wood fed with copper / Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,/ In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.” The color of the flame is not all that important, it sets the unearthly atmosphere and supports the thesis established above, however what is to be considered important is the light that shines on the carved dolphin. The symbol of dolphin was usually associated with love in medieval art. Lines 94-96 are immediately followed by the allusion to the story about Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. The basic synopsis of the story is that the king Tereus rapes his wife's sister Philomela and cuts out her tongue. So she can't speak of this act. However Philomela tells about the raping to her sister, who is queen wife, later by weaving it into the tapestry. The sisters escaped and Philomela is later changed into the nightingale.

The allusion to the story bears the strong significance in the act of rape. This act sort of violates somewhat sleepy and lethargic rest of the second part, but it offers interesting interpretation of the earlier fireplace scene.

As was mentioned before, Eliot strongly draws from the myth of Fisher King and grail legends in which is also important rape scene “In the myth, the curse on the land

follows the rape of the girls at the court of the Fisher King. Lust without love.” (Southam 157).

What the fire-place scene offers is however direct opposite. The fire which is traditionally connected with lust or passion is here “framed by colored stone”. It is kept within its stone prison in form of a fireplace and only the light, not the flames themselves are able to reach the carving of the dolphin. So we are presented with love without lust or without passion. This could be further developed by the “husbands” thoughts of death, when his wife walks down the stairs “Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair / Spread out in fiery points / Glowed into words, then would be savagely still. ” (108-110). She begs her husband to stay with her tonight (to make love?), however he seems to wonder in his own past and thoughts of death. His passion is unable to reach his love and is only “sad light” of what it was when they married.

Very interesting connection to Verdenal’s death could be found in the lines “What is that noise? / The wind under the door.” (117-118). Eliot himself in his notes refers us to the play by John Webster *The Devil’s Law Case*, specifically to the Act III scene ii. where a dying man is stabbed and then thought killed but is ironically really brought to life by the stabbing by its having lanced an earlier wound and causing an infection to be discharged. This could be parallel to Eliot’s first marriage, which closely followed Verdenal’s death. While his newly found love for his wife was supposed to wipe out the memory of close friend dying, this unfortunate marriage ironically brought it back to life even stronger.

There are only two direct references to water in the second part of the poem. First of those two appears at the end of 5th fragment in lines 135 and 136: “The hot water at ten./ And if it rains, a closed car at four.” After extensive research and many futile attempts to interpret those verses I finally found explanation provided in Southam: “135: Hayward: 'To get up late to shorten the boredom of an empty day. And, because of an afternoon downpour, an aimless car drive to kill, the time.' ” (Southam 163).

Aside from illustrating the the dull and sleepy atmosphere of the whole scene, it could also symbolize the futile efforts of mankind. Spiritual emptiness and vain conquest of modern science, symbolized by thick rain, do not motivate the narrator to chase his dreams or do something to contribute to society. He (the narrator) do not feel like doing something useful, he would rather sleep in, wander aimlessly and maybe play a game of chess.

Second mentioning of water is actually very well hidden in the last line of the second

part. “Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.”(172) is allusion to drowning of Ophelia in the William Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act IV, Scene III as described by the Queen Gertrude. This is first in the line of deaths by water in the poem, but also, it is important to notice that Ophelia dies with arms full of flowers. This allusion could have relationship to the lines 36-38, which were commented earlier in this work. Could hyacinth girl with arms full of flowers be reference to Ophelia's drowning and if it is, could this fact once again support the theory that the hyacinth girl is a male figure?

Due to this connection I concluded that the hyacinth girl and the drowned Phoenician sailor from the 4th part of the poem are one and the same figure, since his drowning is the only one explicitly written into the poem. The connection through the Ophelia's death may seem extremely cryptic, however, it makes perfect sense.

The Fire Sermon

The name of the third part, The Fire Sermon, seems to be continuing the impression gained in the first part of The game of Chess. Fire sermon is one of the early Budhists teachings. It seems that Budha, or The Blessed one, how is he called in the sermon itself, addresses the congregation of thousand priests. He instructs them, how to achieve liberation and end of suffering through detachment from the five senses and mind.

“The eye, O priests, is on fire; forms are on fire; eye-consciousness is on fire; impressions received by the eye are on fire; and whatever sensation, pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent, originates in dependence on impressions received by the eye, that also is on fire.” (Warren, Mahâ-Vagga, § 73).

In Buddhism, four classical elements have strong attachment to the bodily functions, and fire particularly has a strong inclination to be connected with strong and passionate feelings, namely hatred, infatuation, anger, sorrow and despair.

Perceiving this, O priests, the learned and noble disciple conceives an aversion for the eye, conceives an aversion for forms, conceives an aversion for eye-consciousness, conceives an aversion for the impressions received by the eye; and whatever sensation, pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent, originates in dependence on impressions received by the eye, for that also he conceives an aversion. Conceives an aversion for the ear, conceives an aversion for sounds, . . . conceives an aversion for the nose, conceives an aversion for odors, . . . conceives an aversion for the tongue, conceives an aversion for tastes, . . . conceives an aversion for the body, conceives an aversion for things tangible, . . . conceives an aversion for the mind, conceives an aversion for ideas, conceives an aversion for mind-consciousness, conceives an aversion for the impressions received (Warren, Mahâ-Vagga, § 73).

The author of the poem suggests or, in better words, tries to convince himself that he too can achieve salvation or free himself from his suffering by emotional and creative sterility, as is indicated on following lines.

Third part of the poem starts with the image of polluted river Thames. First fragment exploits the picture of the Thames, lined with leafless and possibly dead trees. It is also filled with the trash of higher society, like silk handkerchiefs or cigarette ends. The departed nymphs symbolize dead of mystical beauty and life of the river, which now brings only garbage, bones scavenged by rats and doesn't bring any life to "brown land". As a mockery or cynical oxymoron, the protagonist sings a song "Sweet Thames", which stands in direct contrast to the ugly and lifeless scenery around the river.

Analyzing the first fragment in greater depth however uncovers a whole lot of interesting metaphors and allusions, as is expected due to poems nature.

The first line itself starts with very mysterious connection of words: "The river tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf / Clutch and sink into the wet bank..."(175, 176). One of the interpretations could mean, that the metaphorical "tent" of treetops sheltering and protecting the river disappeared as the trees died, symbolizing once again the absence of the protecting hand of higher power, that is no-longer present above humanity. While looking into this metaphor, I found relevant supplement in the Southam: "In the Old Testament 'tent' can mean tabernacle or holy place, arising from the use of a tent as a tabernacle by the wandering tribes of Israel in the wilderness. In Isaiah xxxiii, 20-21, 'the river' is linked with the 'tent' as an image of the power and security that God offers to his chosen people..."(Southam, p. 165). So in this sense, the "broken tent" just deepens the metaphor. Not only the dead trees offer no literal shelter, but also the river loses shelter in mystical sense.

Also sinking of fingers which disappear into the wet bank invoke once again the fearful watery death.

We find interesting connection of two elements in lines 174 and 175: "...The wind / Crosses the brown land, unheard..." The wind could be interpreted as a messenger of some unspecified higher power, but since it is unheard by anyone, the message itself is unable to reach any listener, since the river bank is deserted. The wind is in classical literature established as a bringer of change. The question is to who is the message directed to. The nymphs who were here along time ago, but are recently departed seems as adequate choice. Does the message contains the promise or command to start the rebirth of the polluted wasteland around the river? We may never know, since it will never be heard by the addressee.

Another possibility for the symbolism of wind could be the presence of death spirit,

since the wind was once before in the poem connected to death (in *A Game of Chess* wife asks her husband 'What is that noise?' and the husband answers 'The wind under the door.' as he at the same time thinks about death). So the wind could represent either the spirits of death nymphs, suggesting that their department wasn't the change of address, but rather euphemism for dying.

Another possibility is that the narrator of this part is dead or rather in oxymoronic state of half living and half dead, as is suggested many times through the poem. This would be in harmony with the name of this part of the poem: The narrator freed himself from all passions and instead of the promised salvation or the freedom he finds himself to be emotionally dead inside, and thus not able to influence dying and polluted world around him. This very short and seemingly unimportant phrase could very well express Eliot's own doubts about his ability as a writer to produce notable or important piece of literature.

Furthermore, this interpretation very well corresponds with the closing lines in the fourth part "To Carthage then I came/ Burning burning burning burning " (307, 308). Author himself refers us to the St. Augustine's *Confessions*, who apparently came to Carthage twice. On the second occasion, he apparently traveled there in order to escape from the misery which was caused by the death of a friend, with whom he had a relationship which he describes as "delightful to me above all the delights of this my life". With this knowledge it seems extremely probable that Eliot refers us to the Augustine's second visit to the city, because through whole poem we find all kinds of indirect and cryptic messages which suggest that the poem was partially written as an elegy for Eliot's dear friend Jean Verdenal. However, the line 308 with connection to the lines analyzed above gives Eliot's mourning whole new dimension. The speaker, freed from his passions realizes, that the loss of his friend cause such deep sorrow, that he is unable to put out the fire as Buddha suggests. The word burning is repeated five times, hence suggesting, that he is unable to free his senses from the suffering that such a loss brought him, however the narrator's surrounding remain untouched by his own mourning. The scene, as is typical for the whole *Waste Land*, offers a spark of salvation. In Fire Sermon, Buddha instructs his followers to liberate themselves from the temptation of all five senses and the mind. However the word burning is repeated only five times, each one for individual sense, leaving the sixth one, the one, the mind, without the troubling flame.

In line 176 Eliot refers us to to Edmund Spenser's poem *Prothalamion* where there is

a recurring refrain of : “Against the Brydale day, which was not long:/Sweete Themmes runne softly, till I end my Song. ” (17, 18). Spenser wrote *Prothalamion* as a celebratory poem to the occasion of the double marriage of the daughters of the Earl of Worchester; Elizabeth Somerset and Katherine Somerset. The image of Thames in the poem is of flawless and almost supernatural beauty, as nymphs gather flowers along the river banks. However in *The Waste Land* Nymphs are no longer present, leaving the dying and rubbish-filled river to die in solitude.

Another interesting allusion in the first fragment is located in line “By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . . ” (182). The line seems out of context with the rest of the fragment and so it begs an interpretation.

First and most obvious allusion is probably the similarity to the Bible Psalm 137.

- “1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
3. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. ”

The line is immediately followed by repetition of *Prothalamion* refrain “Sweet Thames”.

This allusion further cements the anti-Christian impression of the first fragment, and summons image of narrator weeping for the the loss of god's presence and remembering the image of paradise (represented by Zion-the promised land).

Southam writes: “Lake Leman is the French name for the Lake of Geneva in Switzerland. At the suggestion of Ottoline Morrell and further encouraged by Julian Huxley, in mid-November 1921 Eliot traveled from Margarete to the lakeside town of Lausanne for treatment by the well-known Psychoterapist Dr. Roger Vittoz, seeking a cure for what Eliot described as ‘aboulie’, a type of emotional frigidity. Here he continued work on *The Waste Land...*” (p. 166). So weeping in the shore of Leman could be allusion to Eliot’s personal experience of recovery from the nervous breakdown and the treatment he underwent in the Lausanne.

Another interesting fact is bounded to the earlier choice of the lake Starnbergersee in the 8th line. The historical significance of the lake, where King Ludwig II of Bavaria died under mysterious circumstances has already been established earlier in this thesis.

On September 10, 1898, Empress Elisabeth of Austria was assassinated by Italian anarchist Luigi Lucheni while boarding steamship *Genève* for Montreux. It is worthwhile to notice,

that Empress Elisabeth was cousin of Ludwig II.

The members of Bavaria's Wittelsbach royal family show up here and there in *The Waste Land*. Apart from Elisabeth and Ludwig II there is also mentioned Marie and her cousin staying at archduke's as children, who overtakes narration in lines 12-18 and is described as archduke cousin. This definitely refers to Countess Marie Larisch and her archduke cousin Rudolph, heir to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, son of Empress Elisabeth. Rudolph and Marie were approximately the same age, so sledding together in winter at their childhood would be appropriate. It is worth noting that Eliot met Marie Larisch sometimes between 1913 and 1920. "According to Mrs. Eliot, the description of the sledding 'was taken verbatim from a conversation with Marie Larisch'." (Southam 142)

Due to this stream of allusions, I believe that Eliot handpicked the Lake Lemman specifically for its historical significance.

Also the assassination of Empress Elisabeth is another water-connected death taking place in *The Waste Land*, however the death itself did not occur by drowning.

Moving into the second fragment of The Fire Sermon there are several lines connected to fisher king. First allusion could be found in lines 189 and 190: "While I was fishing in the dull canal/On a winter evening round behind the gashouse".

To interpret those lines, let me briefly familiarize the reader with the Fisher King myth. Fisher king is a figure from Arthurian legend. He was the king, whose duty was to keep the Holy Grail located in the castle Corbenic. He is wounded in the legs or in the groin region (versions vary in the explanation of the injury) however his impotence seems to have direct effect on his lands and inhabitants, which also suffers from infertility.

Applying this knowledge to these lines, could the narrator identify himself as a fisher king? According to Jesse L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*: "We may also note the fact that the Grail castle is always situated in the close vicinity of water, either on or near the sea, or on the banks of an important river. In two cases the final home of the Grail is in a monastery situated upon an island." (p. 48). Due to his injury, there's nothing much to do for the injured king than fish in the water source near his castle, since his movement capability is very limited. However the canal near the "castle" is described as dull and lifeless. "Even the river, normally a symbol of renewal, has been reduced to a "dull canal.'" (SparkNotes Editors, Sec. III 3:1).

This metaphor center is rather the "gashouse" which could be referred to as a castle

Corbenic or the monastery in which was the grail supposed to be kept. Eliot could be trying to express his doubt about modern technology. However do the factory, which stands for the modern technology, offer any salvation for the modern world? Not quite, since the land around it is once again described as desolate and infertile. Grail is either presented there, but it doesn't have any effect on the wasteland around it, or it is missing.

Further deepening the metaphor, another cynical and relatively sarcastic meaning of water also could be found in the end of second fragment: "O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter / and on her daughter / They wash their feet in soda water" (199-201). Interesting explanation could be found in Brook's analysis of the poem: "In the legends of the Fisher King a footwashing ceremony preceded the restoration of the king. These lines tell us that ordinary water can no longer be used in footwashing - its symbolism has been lost" (qtd. In Simpson).

Lastly, there seems to be another small scene of death by water in line "White bodies naked on the low damp ground" (193). Bodies are left on the river bank, stripped and in undignified manner. Once again, this image of mass-grave corrupts the usual symbolism of water: life and renewal.

Death by Water

Although the “Dead by the water” is the shortest part of the poem, it offers considerable portion of metaphors, symbols and hidden meanings of water. At first reading, it should seem that its only purpose, due to the irrelevant time inclusion (after all, the sailor is Phoenician), would be to show corruption of the water as a life symbol. “Water doesn’t certainly hold any life to him” (Simpson). Phlebas the sailor dies drowned and his body decays. Decay and death, triumph over life and that is it.

On the other hand, should we fear death by the water, as mentioned in line 55 by Madam Sosostris? The poem suggest that Phlebas is freed from his worldly cares. Also it seems that his death is described as merciful and gentle one. It is certainly not fearful. More over, the sea transforms his remains into something appealing and interesting: “Those are pearls that were his eyes ”(48, 125). In Parker’s comment section in *Wasteland* in hypertext you can also read, that “In the deleted part of Part IV there is a shipwreck with more deaths but these also are peaceful deaths and one sailor cracks a joke just before the wreck“ (14) However the most interesting part occurs very subtly in the last five lines of this part.

Eliot acknowledges the sailors death in line 317 “He passed the stages of his age and youth” and quotes it by “Entering the whirlpool.” (318). What particular whirlpool had author in mind? The one that Phlebas died in, or maybe some kind of metaphorical spiritual whirlpool. Could it be that his soul is transferred with others somewhere else? Or could it be allusion to Buddhist concept of karma, where souls circulate endlessly from one existence to other?

Furthermore, he then continues with “Gentile or Jew / O you who turn the wheel and look to windward/ Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you. ”(319-321). In these lines it is important to know, that Gentile means a worshiper of false gods or a heathen. Why is narrator not including Christians and rather addressing heathens and Jews? Could it be that they are excluded, because their fate after death is entirely different from the ones that do not accept Christ?

What the Thunder Said

In the last part of the poem, there are 29 lines that Eliot identified as “water-dripping song” in letter to Ford Madox Ford. Lines in questions are 331-358. The cry for water, sandy road an rock-like mountains-planes reminds me of Book of Exodus and the suffering of people of Jerusalem who wandered through the desert for 40 years. But unlike in the Bible, where God provide Moses stream of clean water upon striking the rock with his staff, there is no such salvation offered here. “The repetitive language and harsh imagery of this section suggest that the end is perhaps near, that not only will there be no renewal but that there will be no survival either “ (Spark Notes Editors, Sec. V 3.1)

The metaphor is further deepened in the line 384 “And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.” This could be interpreted as the poor dead souls that couldn't survive the 'exodus'. They were trying to endure the final cataclysm of the waterless world by desperately hanging on their “wells and cisterns”, without being able to sustain or refill them. This could metaphorically refer to drying of the faith, but this vision is particularly scary in today's world, as the literal supplies of drinking water are running out.

In the lines 366-373, the final apocalypse is brought out. “What is that sound high in the air/
Murmur of maternal lamentation/
Who are those hooded hordes swarming/
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth/
Ringed by the flat horizon only/
What is the city over the mountains/
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air/
Falling towers ”.

First of all, who murmurs the lamentation? The hooded hordes which stumbles into the abyss created over the endless plains? Could the thunder's command be the response to these maternal lamentations of the doomed crowds? Is the earth itself lamenting for her “children” in the sense that we are all children of the mother Earth?

Second, why is the air violet? Two ways of interpretation offer themselves. First one is that the scene happens at the time of late sunset, when last of the sunbeams mixes with the upcoming darkness and creates the violet shade. Life ends and meets Death, as is suggested many times in the poem and mixes into the state of being death and alive at the same time. Another possibility is very cryptic, because in Christian symbolism, the color violet is strongly bound to the time of Advent and the Nativity of Jesus in some churches. So does the violet air, in which everything simultaneously collapses, signifies the expectation of messiah, which fails to arrive, and the narrator comments this illusion of the

salvation by the word “Unreal” (376). It would certainly make sense, if the comment in line 376 would be bounded to the scene as a whole, rather than to the names of the cities.

“In this decayed hole among the mountains/ In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing/ Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel/ There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.” (385-388) offers the last of the cataclysmic scenes of doom. The two (or three) travelers finally reach the chapel, which is supposed to stand for the Chapel Perilous, the resting place of the Holy Grail. However, at the end of their quest, they do not find the item, which were the different narrators chasing since the beginning of the poem. The chapel is home only to the wind, which dances on the graves of the ones that made it this far and makes the grass sing, perhaps in mockery or grief. It seems that all is lost, and the world is sentenced to its inevitable end.

Finally in the line 393 the rooster's call brings the rain, purifying the earth, offering consolation and relief to Wasteland and its desperate inhabitants.

However the salvation is not provided freely. The salvation in *The Waste Land* is not granted by higher power, but is achieved through sacrifice. The lines 396 and 397: “Waited for the rain, while the black clouds/ Gathered far distant, over Himavant”. The salvation is at hand, however in the lines 400-422 the thunder commands “Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata” which is in Sanskrit and stands for “Give, Sympathize, Control”.

From the many adaptation, the one closest to my opinion is that the thunder's voice is a voice of a dying God, who speaks his last words to us, his children and provides us a way to salvation. However, it is up to each individual to absolve this way himself.

In the last fragment Eliot once again refers the readers to the Fisher king in the lines “I sat upon the shore/ Fishing, with the arid plain behind me.” (423, 424) and he asks “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (425). This last line may be allusion to *The Book of Isaiah* Chapter 38, verse 1: “Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.” The narrator seems to accept his fate of being doomed and never healed, but then, in line 426 the London Bridge crashes.

At the first part of this work I commented on the metaphor of the London Bridge being connection between the land of dead and land of living, bounding them firmly together and allowing them to intertwine with one another. The narrator is able to cross

from one side to the other and it is quoted several times through the poem that he is nor living nor death or both at the same time (lines 40, 126, 246, 329 and 405-406). The symbolism of the London Bridge falling down suggests, that the narrator finally reached the salvation, the way to the land of dead is destroyed and the veil that separates both worlds in the form of the river could once again be crossed only with the help of the ferrymen. In a global meaning, everybody could fill his spiritual void with his own interpretation of the thunders advice and tear down his own bridge which binds his mind into the emptiness of death.

In the final line of the poem “Shantih shantih shantih” which Eliot translated as “The Peace which passeth understanding” he finishes *The Waste Land* and regains his creativity and finds his peace. The Fisher King's lands have been restored. Let us hope that April, the cruellest month of all, breeds the lilacs of the death land, feeds the little life with the dried tubers and mixes the memory and desire into something beautiful.

Conclusion

The Waste Land is undoubtedly highly complex poem with countless underline themes and hidden meanings. As a whole, the meaning of the poem is generally regarded in a way, that B.C. Southam proposes in his book:

“ Eliot's immediate Waste Land is the world after the First world War. The 'waste' is not, however, that of war's devastation and bloodshed, but the emotional and spiritual sterility of Western man, the 'waste' of our civilization ... The theme of the poem is the salvation of the Waste Land, not as a certainty but a possibility: of emotional, spiritual and intellectual vitality to be regained.“
(Southam, p. 126)

Theme of this thesis ,however , wasn't interpretation of the meaning of the whole poem, but rather analysis of the means which the poet uses to achieve his goal, more specifically the work was directed at the means connected to classical elements. In this final chapter of the work, I would like to comment on the conclusions which were made during the analysis itself.

Regarding the ratio of the single cases related to individual elements, it may be surprising that the dominant one was water. According to accounts, water is mentioned whether in direct references or indirect allusions 22 times in the whole poem. Author seemingly didn't to pay such attention to any other of the elements, earth is mentioned 8 times, while water and air are both directly mentioned only 4 times with almost no indirect allusions. It is important to notice that for each metaphor or more complex meaning individual elements were accounted only once. For example water and earth gained only score of one account for water dripping song in lines 331-358. Although if I were to account every appearance of the words connected to each element, it would make the difference only grater, with water still completely dominating the poem.

The readers certainly has to ask themselves why is the water dominant element. It certainly isn't the first association which comes to mind, while considering the poem's title *The Waste Land*. Certainly the more appropriate imagery would be a barren plains or arid deserts, or perhaps ruined cities with fire or earth being the dominant imagery.

The water appears in the poem so often for a reason. Let us inspect summary of meanings for this element as they were presented in the thesis and consider the metaphorical curve of evolution on which the water dwells.

Water appears for the first time in the poem in the first fragment of *The Burial of the Dead*. In this instance the water works in traditional symbolism: it brings a new life with spring. This rebirth however isn't described as a pleasant revival of the nature, but as something corrupted and rotten. Also the lake of Starnbergersee is mentioned. In a retrospect, it is debatable why Eliot chose this lake. If we adhere to the version, that the lake was chosen because of its historical significance, it certainly means death or the resting place of the dead. However, the concept of death by water wasn't yet established in the poem, so the second possibility, that Starnbergersee was chosen to melancholically reflect upon the happier time in poets life, is also probable.

Moreover, the significance of Starnbergersee as a memory agent is supported by meaning of water in the second fragment, where Eliot remembers his departed friend Jean Verdenal in the section of „hyacinth garden“, bordered by extracts from Wagner's opera. It is the first time that water is connected to Verdenal and this connection continues throughout the poem in several instances. Most notable of them are in lines 47, 55, 172, 188 and basically whole part IV *Death by Water*.

In the last fragment of the first part, water was interpreted as a veil dividing the land of the living and the land of the dead, now firmly bounded together with London bridge. This symbol is summoned once more at the end of the poem, when the London bridge crashes.

The water appears in the second fragment of the second part in a form of heavy rain, which supports the narrators grim and sleepy mood. The rain however doesn't have any affiliation with rebirth and is sterile.

In the fourth part, water appears for the first time as explicit allusion to the Christianity, in the form of polluted river. There were vague hints earlier in the poem to connection of water to religion, however this is first time we can be almost certain that water is supposed to symbolize corruption of the church and the lack of salvation that faith can deliver.

And finally in the fifth part, water reappears in its original meaning: the merciful rain, which brings back fertility to the land and relief. However the rain doesn't start, until the 'pilgrims' of the fifth part reach the grail chapel and find it empty and the thunder gives it's

final command.

So as we can see, water is used throughout the poem in whole range of meanings. The original quality of water, which was established in the introductory chapter to the classical elements, the purity, is lost in the Waste Land, as is best illustrated in lines 198-201 (the foot-washing ceremony). It doesn't bring life, the rain is sterile and there is long line of those who drown in the impure water. Even if the water brings life, as it does in the first fragment of the first part, it seems as act of corruption and carnivorous blasphemy, then a true and celebration-worthy rebirth.

It is suggested several times through the poem, that water possesses the power of transmutation, which is usually connected with the fire. This is namely in scenes when somebody is drowned and Shakespeare's *Tempest* is quoted (Those are the pearls that were his eyes). However this transmutation always demands sacrifice of a life and isn't always carried out.

In comparison, earth, which is the second most frequented element, doesn't seem to have such a wide range of meanings. It is usually referred to as a "dead land" or "arid plain". It corresponds with the myth of the Fisher King, who was crippled and his lands became infertile. It is up to the reader to decide, whether the Fisher King is the metaphor for the author himself. There is only one instance where the red rock offers relief in the second fragment of the first part, however its shadow seems to be inhabited by a madman, who demands sacrifices and offers twisted visions.

Wind isn't used much in the poem, and when it is, it doesn't bring changes as it is supposed to. In two instances it is connected to death, first time in the last fragment of the first part, where it is represented by dead souls explanation, second time it is, once again, allusion to Verdental. The third occasion on which the wind appears is the first part of the fire sermon. Here the wind is the bringer of changes, however, because it is "unheard", the message which is the agent of the change is unable to reach the listeners and therefor the change isn't carried out. At last, violet air bears very cryptic and elusive meaning which is described in detail in the thesis.

Fire has only one connotation in *The Waste Land* and that is passion. Interestingly enough, the nature's most potent force of destruction and transmutation doesn't seem to destroy or transmute anything. But as was mentioned in the opening of this conclusion, *The Waste Land* doesn't suggest actual waste or destruction of the material world, but rather abstract emotional waste. When the fire is mentioned for the first time, it is contained

within the fireplace and only the sad light can escape. As is suggested by the Buddha's fire sermon, the author rid himself of the passion, however instead of liberating him from the suffering, it only made him more infertile and emotionally dead.

To conclude this thesis, it seems surprising that the author were able to use the natural elements in such a range of meanings. The most potent element in *The Waste Land* was undisputedly water, while the element with the least possible meanings was fire.

Please remember that interpretation of literature isn't exact science and this thesis isn't in any meaning dogmatic. The focus of this work was to inspect the possibilities, in which the natural elements can serve as a metaphors and allusions and it should be regarded as such.

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