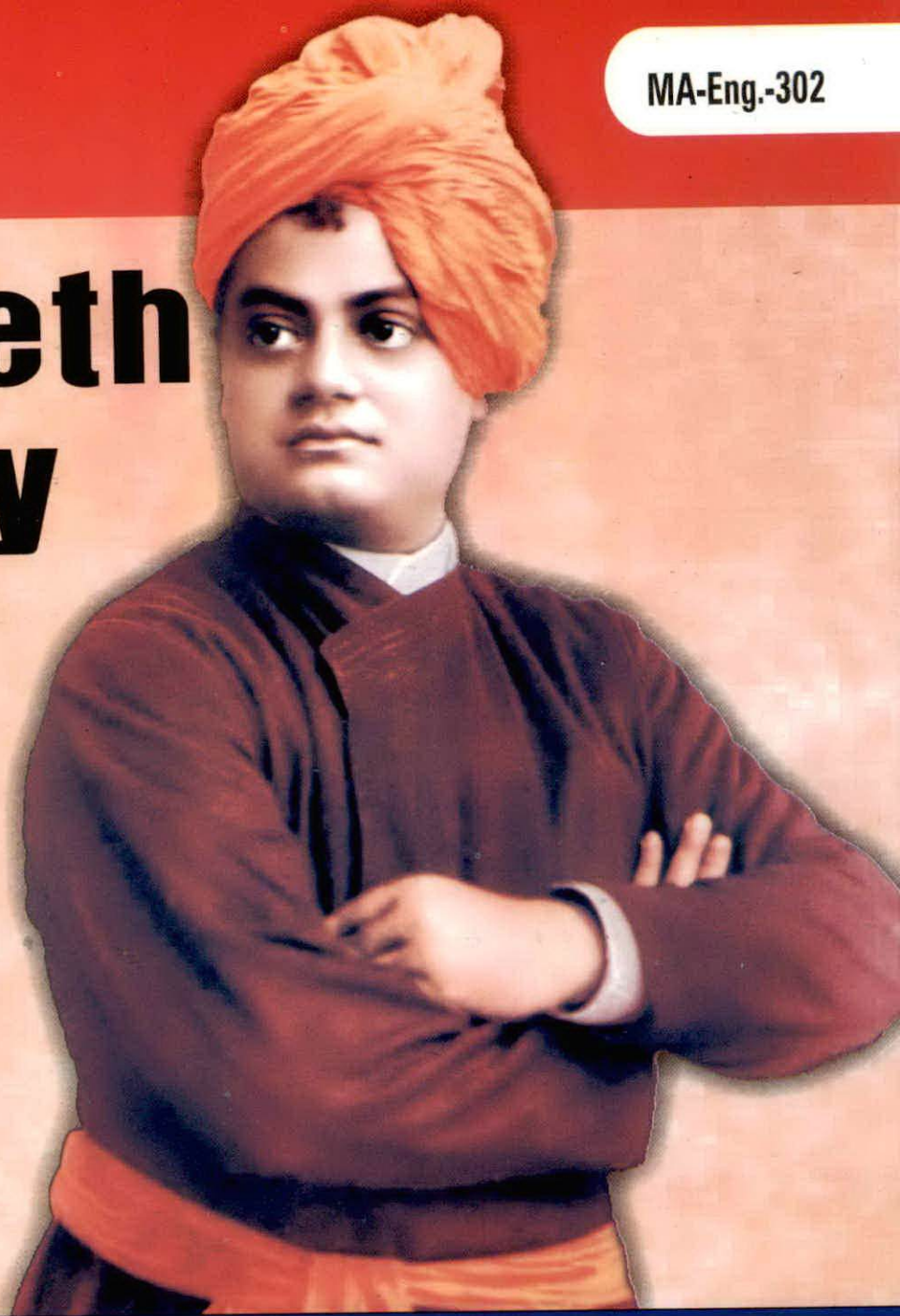


Twentieth Century Poetry and Drama



DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

**SWAMI VIVEKANAND
SUBHARTI UNIVERSITY**

Meerut (National Capital Region Delhi)

PREFACE

In this course, we shall deal with various aspects of Twentieth Century Poetry and Drama

- o W.B. YEATS
- o T.S. ELIOT
- o EZRA POUND
- o HENRY IV (PIRANDELLO) SUMMARY

SYLLABUS

Semester-III

Twentieth Century Poetry and Drama

(MA-Eng-302)

Unit-I W.B. Yeats

‘Adam’s Curse’, ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’, ‘Easter 1916’, ‘A Dialogue of Self and Soul’,

Unit-II T. S. Eliot:

The Waste Land

Unit-III Ezra Pound

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley’

Unit-IV Luigi Pirandello

Henry IV, Tr, Julian Mitchell (London; Eyre Methuen, 1979)

CONTENTS

1. W.B. YEATS	1-52
2. T.S. ELIOT	53-87
3. EZRA POUND	88-117
4. HENRY IV (PIRANDELLO) SUMMARY	118-132

UNIT-I

W. B. Yeats

W.B. YEATS

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Learning Objectives
- Introduction
- The Second Coming
- Sailing to Byzantium
- Easter 1916
- A Dialogue of Self and Soul
- The Tower
- Leda and the Swan
- Among School Children
- Summary
- Key Words
- Answers to Check Your Progress
- Review Questions
- Further Readings

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the critical summary of the poem, "Sailing to Byzantium"
- discuss the religionists aspects in the poem, "Easter 1916"
- examine the major them of the poem, "The Tower"
- enumerate the summary of the poem, "Among School children"
- critically appreciate the poem, "Dialogue between the soul and self".

INTRODUCTION

William Butler Yeats, 13 June 1865–28 January 1939 was an Irish poet and playwright, and one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature. A pillar of both the Irish and British literary establishments, in his later years Yeats served as an Irish Senator for two terms. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival and, along with Lady Gregory,

Edward Martyn, and others, founded the Abbey Theatre, where he served as its chief during its early years. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for what the Nobel Committee described as "inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation." He was the first Irishman so honoured. Yeats is generally considered one of the few writers who completed their greatest works after being awarded the Nobel Prize; such works include *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1929).

Yeats was born and educated in Dublin but spent his childhood in County Sligo. He studied poetry in his youth and from an early age was fascinated by both Irish legends and the occult. Those topics feature in the first phase of his work, which lasted roughly until the turn of the 20th century. His earliest volume of verse was published in 1889 and those slow-paced and lyrical poems display debts to Edmund Spenser, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the Pre-Raphaelite poets. From 1900, Yeats' poetry grew more physical and realistic. He largely renounced the transcendental beliefs of his youth, though he remained preoccupied with physical and spiritual masks, as well as with cyclical theories of life.

Yeats is generally considered one of the twentieth century's key English language poets. He was a Symbolist poet, in that he used allusive imagery and symbolic structures throughout his career. Yeats chose words and assembled them so that, in addition to a particular meaning, they suggest other abstract thoughts that may seem more significant and resonant. His use of symbols is usually something physical that is both itself and a suggestion of other, perhaps immaterial, timeless qualities.

THE SECOND COMING

POEM

TURNING and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image out of it Spiritus Mundi}
 Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
 A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
 Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
 The darkness drops again; but now I know
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
 Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Synopsis

The poem begins with the image of a falcon flying out of earshot its human master. In medieval times, people would use falcons or hawks to track down animals at ground level. In this image, however, the falcon has gotten itself lost by flying too far away, which we can read as a reference to the collapse of traditional social arrangements in Europe at the time Yeats was writing.

In the fourth line, the poem abruptly shifts into a description of "anarchy" and an orgy of violence in which "the ceremony of innocence is drowned." The speaker laments that only bad people seem to have any enthusiasm nowadays.

At line 9, the second stanza of the poem begins by setting up a new vision. The speaker takes the violence which has engulfed society as a sign that "the Second Coming is at hand." He imagines a sphinx in the desert, and we are meant to think that this mythical creature, rather than Christ, is what is coming to fulfill the prophecy from the Biblical Book of Revelation. In line 18, the vision ends as "darkness drops again," but the speaker remains troubled.

Finally, at the end of the poem, the speaker asks a rhetorical question which really amounts to a prophecy that the beast is on its way to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, to be born into the world.

Lines 1-2

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
 The falcon is described as "turning" in a "widening gyre" until it can no longer "hear the falconer," its human master.

A gyre is a spiral that expands outwardly as it goes up. Yeats uses the image of gyres frequently in his poems to describe the motion of history toward chaos and instability.

In actual falconry, the bird is not supposed to keep flying in circles forever; it is eventually supposed to come back and land on the falconer's glove. (Interesting fact: falconers wear heavy gloves to keep the birds from scratching them with their claws.)

Line 3

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

The "notion" that "things fall apart" could still apply to the falcon, but it's also vague enough to serve as a transition to the images of more general chaos that follow.

The second part of the line, a declaration that "the centre cannot hold," is full of political implications (like the collapse of centralized order into radicalism). This is the most famous line of the poem: the poem's "thesis," in a nutshell.

Lines 4-6

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere. The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

These three lines describe a situation of violence and terror through phrases like "anarchy," "blood-dimmed tide," and "innocence [...1 drowned." (By the way, "mere" doesn't mean "only" in this context; it means "total" or "pure.").

Overall, pretty scary stuff.

Also, with words like "tide," "loosed," and "drowned," the poem gives the sensation of water rushing around us. It's like Noah's flood all over again, except there's no orderly line of animals headed two-by-two into a boat.

What's Yeats referring to here? Is this a future prophecy, the poet's dream, or maybe a metaphor for Europe at war? There's really no way to be sure-Yeats doesn't seem to want us to know too much.

Lines 7-8

The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity.

Who are "the best" and "the worst"?

One way of deciphering them is that Yeats is talking about "the good" and "the bad." But he doesn't use those words in the poem, and these lines are a clue as to why not.

For one thing, if "the best lack all conviction," can they really be that good? Believing in something enough to act on it is kind of what being good is all about.

On the other hand, "the worst" have all the "intensity" on their side, which is good for them, but definitely not for everyone else.

Think about that time you dropped your lunch in the cafeteria and all the people you hate laughed really hard, and all your friends were too embarrassed to do anything about it. According to Yeats, Europe after the war is kind of like that. Things are so messed up that you can't tell the good and the bad apart.

Lines 9-10

Surely some revelation is at hand; Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

Notice how these two lines are almost exactly the same. This is where the speaker tells us what he thinks is going on, but the repetition means that he's maybe not so sure and is slowly trying to figure things out.

It's a revelation, he says, which is when the true meaning of something is revealed.

Not only that, but it's a revelation according to the most reputable source for these kinds of things: the Book of Revelation.

Apparently, all this violence and moral confusion means "the Second Coming is at hand." According to the Bible, that means Christ is going come back and set everything straight, right?

We'll see. For now, the poem is about to take another turn.

Lines 11-13

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

So maybe we're not saved.

The words "Second Coming" seem to have made the speaker think of something else, so that he repeats the phrase as an exclamation. It's like, "Eureka!" It makes him think of a "vast image out of Spiritus Mundi."

To know what this means, you have to know that Yeats was very interested in the occult and believed that people have a supernatural connection to one another. It's in the same ballpark as telepathy or a psychic connection, but not quite as kooky as those other things. It's more like we're all connected to a big database of communal memories going back all the way through human history, which we can get in contact with when we're feeling truly inspired.

Literally, Spiritus Mundi means "spirit of the world."

The speaker, through his sudden, revelatory connection to the world, is given access to a vision that takes him "somewhere in the sands of the desert."

Line 14

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

Here, he is describing the sphinx, a mythical beast "with lion body and the head of a man."

You might have seen the picture of the ancient sphinx in Egypt: it's pretty famous. But Yeats isn't talking about that sphinx, *per se*. He's talking about the original, archetypal symbol of the sphinx that first inspired the Egyptians to build that big thing in the desert, and which is now inspiring him.

Lines 15-17

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun, Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

In these lines he describes the sphinx's expression and what it is doing.

By calling its gaze "pitiless," he doesn't mean "evil" or "mean-spirited." In fact, the sphinx really seems to have an inhuman expression that is

as indifferent as nature itself. It is "blank," statuesque, and incapable of having empathy with other humans.

This might not tell us much, but now we know that the sphinx doesn't jibe at all with the way most people think of Christ. In other words, this "Second Coming" doesn't seem to have a lot in common with the descent of Christ from Heaven as described in the Book of Revelation.

Nor does it seem to be in any big hurry to get here, as it moves "it's slow thighs."

But, strangely, this slowness only seems to add to the suspense and terror, like Michael Myers chasing Jamie Lee Curtis in the movie *Halloween*.

Even the birds are agitated, or "indignant," but it's not clear why. Their circling is similar to the gyres of the falcon from the beginning of the poem, but from what we know about desert birds, like vultures, when they fly in circles it's often because they think something will die soon.

Lines 18-20

The darkness drops again; but now I know That twenty centuries of stony sleep Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

The vision from Spiritus Mundi ends as "darkness drops again," like a stage curtain, but it has left the speaker with a strong prophetic impression. He knows something that he didn't before, namely, that this strange sphinx is a symbol that will bear on the future.

Thinking outside the poem, it's safe to say that he is talking about Europe's future, and perhaps the world's in general.

What exactly does the speaker claim to "know"? "Twenty centuries" refers to roughly the amount of time that has passed since the "first coming" of Christ. But we have already seen that the Second Coming is not going to be anything like the first.

Although 2,000 years seems like a long time to us, Yeats compares it to a single night of an infant's sleep, which is suddenly "vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle."

The cradle reinforces the image that something has recently been "born," and its motion also serves as a metaphor for social upheaval.

It's interesting that the infant doesn't wake up because of the rocking. It instead begins to have nightmares, much like the recent nightmares afflicting European society, whose long history amounts to no more than the first stages of childhood. It's the terrible two's of an entire continent.

Lines 21-22

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

The object of Yeats's vision, which was formerly symbolized as a pitiless sphinx, is now described as a "rough beast" on its way to Bethlehem - the birthplace of Christ - "to be born."

The "slouching" of this beast is animalistic and similar to the slow gait of the sphinx in the desert. It sounds more than a little menacing.

Yeats is using the birth at Bethlehem as a metaphor of the passage of this malevolent beast from the spirit world - Spiritus Mundi - to the real, everyday world, where its effects will be visible to everyone.

By phrasing these lines as a question, Yeats tantalizes us with all the possibilities of what he might be describing. In the time since Yeats wrote the poem, the beast has been interpreted as a prediction of everything bad that the twentieth century has wrought, particularly the horrors of World War II: Hitler, fascism, and the atomic bomb.

It is the "nightmare" from which society would not be able to awake. Of course, Yeats would not have known about these specific things. However, he did seem to have a sense that things were still getting worse while most people around him thought things were getting better.

Some readers have thought that the birth at the end was an ironic vision of the Antichrist, an embodiment of evil as powerful as Christ was an embodiment of goodness.

Others believe that the beast, even though it is described as "rough," might not be evil, but merely a manifestation of the kind of harsh justice that society as a whole deserves. In other words, things have become so violent and decadent that God's only solution is to deploy his all-purpose cleanser.

Summary

The speaker describes a nightmarish scene: the falcon, turning in a widening "gyre" (spiral), cannot hear the falconer; "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold"; anarchy is loosed upon the world; "The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/the ceremony of innocence is drowned." The best people, the speaker says, lack all conviction, but the worst "are full of passionate intensity."

Surely, the speaker asserts, the world is near a revelation; "Surely the Second Coming is at hand." No sooner does he think of "the Second Coming," then he is troubled by a vast image of the Spiritus Mundi, or the collective spirit of mankind: somewhere in the desert, a giant sphinx ("A shape with lion body and the head of a man/A gaze as blank and pitiless as the sun") is moving, while the shadows of desert birds reel about it. The darkness drops again over the speaker's sight, but he knows that the sphinx's twenty centuries of "stony sleep" have been made a nightmare by the motions of "a rocking cradle." And what "rough beast," he wonders, "its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

Form

"The Second Coming" is written in a very rough iambic pentameter, but the meter is so loose, and the exceptions so frequent, that it actually seems closer to free verse with frequent heavy stresses. The rhymes are likewise haphazard; apart from the two couplets with which the poem opens, there are only coincidental rhymes in the poem, such as "man" and "sun."

Commentary

Because of its stunning, violent imagery and terrifying ritualistic language, "The Second Coming" is one of Yeats's most famous and most anthologized poems; it is also one of the most thematically obscure and difficult to understand. (It is safe to say that very few people who love this poem could paraphrase its meaning to satisfaction.) Structurally, the poem is quite simple—the first stanza describes the conditions present in the world (things falling apart, anarchy, etc.), and the second surmises from those conditions that a monstrous Second Coming is about to take place, not of the Jesus we first knew, but of a new messiah, a "rough beast," the

slouching sphinx rousing itself in the desert and lumbering toward Bethlehem. This brief exposition, though intriguingly blasphemous, is not terribly complicated; but the question of what it should signify to a reader is another story entirely.

Yeats spent years crafting an elaborate, mystical theory of the universe that he described in his book *A Vision*. This theory issued in part from Yeats's lifelong fascination with the occult and mystical, and in part from the sense of responsibility. Yeats felt to order his experience within a structured belief system. The system is extremely complicated and not of any lasting importance—except for the effect that it had on his poetry, which is of extraordinary lasting importance. The theory of history Yeats articulated in *A Vision* centers on a diagram made of two conical spirals, one inside the other, so that the widest part of one of the spirals rings around the narrowest part of the other spiral, and vice versa. Yeats believed that this image (he called the spirals "gyres") captured the contrary motions inherent within the historical process, and he divided each gyre into specific regions that represented particular kinds of historical periods (and could also represent the psychological phases of an individual's development).

"The Second Coming" was intended by Yeats to describe the current historical moment (the poem appeared in 1921) in terms of these gyres. Yeats believed that the world was on the threshold of an apocalyptic revelation, as history reached the end of the outer gyre (to speak roughly) and began moving along the inner gyre. In his definitive edition of Yeats's poems, Richard J. Finneran quotes Yeats's own notes:

The end of an age, which always receives the revelation of the character of the next age, is represented by the coming of one gyre to its place of greatest expansion and of the other to its place of greatest contraction... The revelation

[that] approaches take its character from the contrary movement of the

interior gyre....

In other words, the world's trajectory along the gyre of science, democracy, and heterogeneity is now coming apart, like the frantically widening flight-path of the falcon that has lost contact with the falconer; the next age will take its character not from the gyre of science, democracy, and speed, but from the contrary inner gyre—which, presumably, opposes mysticism, primal power, and slowness to the science and democracy of the outer gyre. The "rough beast" slouching toward Bethlehem is the symbol of this new age; the speaker's vision of the rising sphinx is his vision of the character of the new world.

This seems quite silly as philosophy or prophecy (particularly in light of the fact that it has not come true as yet). But as poetry, and understood more broadly than as a simple reiteration of the mystic theory of *A Vision*, "The Second Coming" is a magnificent statement about the contrary forces at work in history, and about the conflict between the modern world and the ancient world. The poem may not have the thematic relevance of Yeats's best work, and may not be a poem with which many people can personally identify; but the aesthetic experience of its passionate language is powerful enough to ensure its value and its importance in Yeats's work as a whole.

Analysis

"The Second Coming" is easily one of the most famous and frequently quoted poems in all of Western literature. Several famous prose writers have used lines from W.B. Yeats's poems as titles to their books, and "The Second Coming" is no exception. For example, Chinua Achebe, an African writer, used part of the third line as the title of his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, and Woody Allen recently wrote a book called *Mere Anarchy*.

Yeats's poem was first published in 1920, a year after the end of World War I, "the Great War," in which millions of European died. While many people at the time just wanted to get on with their lives, Yeats thought that European society had pretty much broken down, and the poem is a terrifying prediction of future violence. Unfortunately, the rise of Hitler and fascism in the 1930s proved him largely correct, and many find the poem disturbingly prophetic in light of the later wars of the twentieth century. However, we shouldn't somehow think that Yeats was a depressive based on this single work, his bleakest. Many of his other poems engage with more uplifting subjects, like love and Irish folklore. Nor should we think that Yeats was defeatist. After all, he was a very active figure in Irish politics throughout his life, which was in the process of gaining its independence from England. By the time this poem was published, he had already been famous for many years, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923.

Check your progress

1. Write a note on the poem, "Second Coming".

2. Write about the form of the poem, "Second Coming".

POEM**I**

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unaging intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make

Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Sailing to Byzantium-A Critical Summary

"Sailing to Byzantium" is the first poem in a collection called *The Tower*, published in 1928. Perhaps it is the most famous single poem in this collection. Its main concern is aging, passing time and man's mortality. The poem shows how an old man solves the problem of age, death and regeneration. Yeats's comment on the poem will be of interest to the reader: "Now I am trying to write about the state of my soul, for it is right for an old man to make his soul, and some of my thoughts upon that subject known. I have put them into a poem called 'Sailing to Byzantium' Byzantium was the centre of European civilization and the source of its spiritual philosophy, so I symbolize the search for the spiritual life by a journey to the city." The poem derives its beauty and strength from a carefully built system of oppositions.

Sensual Life in Ireland

Stanza I

The poet, now an old man, vehemently declares that Ireland is not a suitable place for old men because the country seems to belong to the young who adore sensual pleasure. He adds that he has decided to leave Ireland. In the following lines the poet presents a rich and vivid picture of Ireland and highlights how young people are given to the enjoyments of the passing day. It is a beautiful place with a bewitching landscape. The young men and women are in close embrace. The love-birds sitting on the tree top sing out of excitement as it is mating season for them. The young of all species — fish, flesh and fowl — adore sensual life. Engrossed in the joys of the senses the young people neglect the "monuments of unaging intellect." In other words the youth "caught in the sensual music" of life do not care for immortal pleasure offered by the world of art, religion and philosophy. The young of all species are dying from the moment of their birth but they do not notice it. That is the greatest irony. The old man who can no longer participate in sensual delight justifies his spiritual journey to Byzantium in search of "monuments of unaging intellect."

The highly imagistic first stanza is equally symbolic. While giving a description of the enchanting Irish landscape the poet talks about "the salmon-falls" and "the mackerel-crowded seas." The salmon and the mackerels are two varieties of fish. They are symbols; and as symbols they

represent power and beauty. They are suggestive of teeming life. To enjoy sensual life strength and beauty are essential and the young have them in abundance and indulge in unlimited procreation. The poet dismisses them as dying generations. "Those dying generations" remind the reader of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." The dying generations are caught in the cycle of birth and life up in death. They ignore art that has in an appeal transcending time and death.

Journey to Byzantium

Stanza II

The first two lines of the second stanza present the miserable predicament of the old man. The image of the insignificant old man gets intensified when he is compared to "a tattered coat upon a stick." The old man will be considered a figure of fun and will be looked upon contemptuously by others unless he realises the magnificence of the soul. The soul of the aged must seek that which the youth neglects. The old man by his own efforts should understand the greatness of the soul as there is no school to make him realize the magnificence of the soul. Only by studying "monuments" — great works of art — he could realize the magnificence of the human soul. The weaker a man grows in body, the greater should be his joy in the works of art. So the old man says he has sailed the seas and has ultimately arrived at the holy city of Byzantium, the city of the unageing art, to achieve his goal.

"Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing/For every tatter in its mortal dress" is the most significant and at the same time an abstract idea presented in this stanza. The influence of William Blake (a Romantic poet and a mystic) on Yeats is clearly evident here. Blake said he had seen, in a vision, his dead brother's soul ascending to heaven clapping its hands. Yeats taking a cue from this presents the bizarre image of the soul clapping its hands. But the idea conveyed is clear. As man grows old, the body decays and the soul matures. Hence the dissolution of the body should be a cause for happiness. After death the soul leaves the "tattered frame" and is in a state of ecstasy as it is freed from the prison of the body. So while ascending to heaven the disembodied soul sings loudly clapping its hands.

Byzantium is a symbol. As a symbol it stands for the immortal world of art. It will be of interest to note that the historic Byzantium was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire before the attack of the Turks in 1453. It was then known for its art treasures. It was a kind of capitol of art. It was remarkable for the skill of its craftsmen and the beauty of its buildings. Mosaic art and gold enamelling were done to perfection in the city. Byzantium is shown by the poet as the country of the old in contrast to Ireland, the country of the young. In Byzantium "spiritual life and creations

of art merge into each other, the merger symbolising the very centre of the Unity of Being." Yeats also brings in the Platonic concept of oneness. All art of realizing the magnificence of the soul is to study the great works of art.

Appeal to Artists of the Past

Stanza III

The old poet could now visualize the great artists of the past standing like mosaic figures in the holy fire at the purgatory undergoing a process of purification. He begs "the sages standing in God's holy fire" to come out of the holy fire and spiral down to earth; and he implores them to teach his soul to sing. In other words he makes a fervent appeal to the souls of the past artists to retrace the stages of their existence (by making spiral — like movement) and come down to earth and consumes his heart away as it is sick with passionate desires. The old man appeals to sages (souls of the great artists of the past) to purge his heart of all impurities and create a taste for eternal verities and values. He wants to become immortal like them and hence implores them to teach him the secrets of the soul and of art. The poet seeks inspiration from masters of the past to accomplish his present task of writing great poetry so as to become immortal like them.

Critics consider this stanza as the poem's climax. The expression "perne in a gyre" found in this stanza poses a problem to the reader in understanding the idea behind it. Yeats, being aware of this, has given a clue to understand this line. According to Yeats "perne" is another name for a spool or a bobbin or a cone-like structure on which the thread is wound. So, to perne is to move with a circular motion. "Gyre" means spiral. Yeats divided history into cycles of about 2000 years each. To represent this conception of time, Yeats uses the geo-metrical symbol of the gyre or cone. (For details read the section "Yeats and His System"). "Consume my heart away sick with desire" is a lyric cry. The reader is reminded of Shelley's influence. Shelley makes a lyric cry in his "Ode to the West Wind". Yeats was an admirer of Shelley.

Desire to Become an Artefact

Stanza IV

After death his disembodied soul would not choose any living creature because all living creatures are corruptible. Instead it would choose an incorruptible art object like a golden bird perched on a golden bough fashioned by the Grecian goldsmiths and dwell in it permanently. In other words, once the poet is released from the bondage of life he would seek no reincarnation in flesh as physical reincarnation is a state of corruption in which the soul has to remain enslaved by passion. But he would become a golden singing bird such as the one found in the emperor's palace at Byzantium and sing continuously of the past, the present and the future.

Unlike an ordinary bird which sings only during "summer", this golden bird, a great work of art, will be singing of "what is past or passing or to come." The ageless golden bird is the artifact and it pours out the soul's music without any interruption to the mythical lords and ladies of Byzantium.

In the first stanza the poet talks about "sensual music." Sensual music which is transient degrades man. In the last stanza he refers to the "spiritual music." Everlasting spiritual music elevates the soul. There is an implicit contrast between the sensual music which commends "whatever is begotten, born and dies" and the eternal music of the golden bird which sings of "what is past or passing or to come." About the idea presented in the last stanza Yeats wrote: "I have read somewhere that in the Emperor's palace at Byzantium was a tree made of gold and silver and artificial birds that sang." The emperor refers to Theophilus who ruled over Byzantium from AD 829 to 842. The impact of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is discernible in this stanza. Some critics are of the opinion that there is nothing so dignified here as in "Ode on a Grecian Urn". The bird is an artificial toy built to amuse the bored emperor, These critics consider the last stanza as the poem's tame ending.

Glossary

Line 4

(i) the salmon falls: Precipitous falls in rivers over which the salmon, a kind of fish, leaps in going up river to breed.

(ii) mackerel-crowded: full of mackerel, a kind of sea-fish marked on the back with dark stripes and much used for food.

Line 7

caught in that sensual music: attracted by the beauty of a life devoted to the pleasure to the pleasure of the senses.

Line 9

paltry: petty, worthless.

Line 10

a tattered coat upon a stick: The shrunken flesh which barely covers the bones is thus effectively compared to a torn coat on a stick. Yeats must have had also in mind the famous comparison of bodies to dresses in the Bhagavad Gita (chapter II) with which he was familiar. Krishna says cast off worn-out bodies and assume new ones just as man clothes.

Line 16

Byzantium: the city later known as Constantinople and the capital of the Roman Empire from 330 A.D. and also the Eastern Roman Empire from 395 A.D. till its capture by the Turks in 1453 A.D.

Line 17

- (i) perne: Probably in Irish word meaning whirl round as on a bobbin.
- (ii) gyre :a ring, a vortex.
- (iii) perne in a gyre :

The poet pictures the history and life as a contest between pairs of whirling cones placed opposite each other. As one civilisation decays, another rises up. As subjectivity decays, objectivity progresses. The saints are beyond the whirling gyres, having become "flame" reduced to the simplicity of artistic or spiritual perfection. But this is a state from which there is a return to the world. They are invited to return and help the poet.

Line 22 a dying animal: This refers to the ageing body.

Line 30 set upon bough: Wilson traces the golden tree to Gibbon, who mentions a project of a Byzantine Emperor who was envious of a tree made of gold and silver in the courtyard of the Caliph of Baghdad. The Emperor obtained "a golden tree, with leaves and petals, which sheltered a multitude of birds, warbling their notes". The poet must have related this to many mythological prototypes where the sun and moon hang as fruit and birds sing of regeneration.

Check your progress

3. Write a note on the poem, "Sailing to Byzantium".

EASTER 1916

POEM

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done

Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly;
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horse;
This other his helper and friend
Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout.
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem

Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road.
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse plashes within it;
The long-legged moor-hens dive,
And hens to moor-cocks call;
Minute by minute they live:
The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse -
MacDonagh and MacBride

And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

W. B. Yeats

Easter, 1916 is a poem by W. B. Yeats describing the poet's torn emotions regarding the events of the Easter Rising staged in Ireland against British rule on Easter Monday, April 24, 1916. The uprising was unsuccessful, and most of the Irish republican leaders involved were executed for treason. The poem was written between May and September 1916.

Commentary and Interpretation

Although a committed nationalist, Yeats generally disapproved of violence as a means to securing Irish independence, and as a result had strained relations with some of the figures who eventually led the uprising.

The deaths of these revolutionary figures at the hands of the British however, was as much a shock to Yeats as it was to ordinary Irish people at the time who did not expect events to take a worse turn so soon. Yeats was working through his feelings about the revolutionary movement in this poem, and the insistent refrain about how "a terrible beauty is born" turned out to be rather prescient—as the brutal execution of the Easter Rising leaders by the British had the opposite intended effect, and led to a reinvigoration of the Irish Republican movement rather than its dissipation.

The initial social and ideological distance between Yeats and some of the revolutionary figures is portrayed in the poem when, in the first stanza, the poem's narrator admits to having exchanged only "polite meaningless words" (6) with the revolutionaries prior to the uprising, sharing perhaps "a mocking tale or gibe" (10) but nothing more. However, this attitude changes with the refrain at the end of the stanza, when Yeats moves from a feeling of separation between the narrator and the revolutionaries, to a mood of distinct unity, by including all subjects of the poem in the last line with referent to the utter change that is happening when the revolutionary leaders were executed by the British: "All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born." (15-16) These last lines of the stanza have rhythmic similarities to the popular ballads of the era as well as syntactic echoes of William Blake.

In the second stanza, the narrator proceeds to describe in greater detail the key figures involved in the Easter uprising, alluding to them, without actually listing names. The female revolutionary described at the opening of

the stanza is Countess Markiewicz who was well-known to Yeats and a longtime friend. The man who "kept a school/And rode our winged horse" is a reference to Patrick Pearse, and the lines about Pearse's "helper and friend" allude to Thomas MacDonagh. In Yeats's description of the three, his torn feelings about the Easter uprising are most keenly communicated. He contrasted the "shrill" voice of Countess Markiewicz as a revolutionary with his remembrance of her uncomparably "sweet" voice when she was a young woman; and he contrasted the haughty public personae of Pearse and MacDonagh against his impression of their "sensitive" nature, describing how "daring and sweet" their ideals were even though they had to resort to "force".

This stanza also showed how Yeats was able to separate his own private feelings towards some of the revolutionary figures from the greater nationalist cause that the group was pursuing. Whilst Yeats had positive regard for the three Republican leaders mentioned above, he despised Major John MacBride, who as the estranged husband of Maud Gonne (who in turn had been the object of Yeats's romantic feelings for a number of years) had abused both Gonne and their daughter during their marriage. In this poem, although MacBride is alluded to as a "vainglorious lout" (32) who had "done most bitter wrong" (33) to those close to the narrator's heart; nevertheless, Yeats includes him in his eulogy as among those who have fallen for their republican ideals: "Yet I number him in the song;/He, too, has resigned his part/In the casual comedy/He, too, has been changed in turn" (36-7). The phrase "the casual comedy" is full of sarcasm — it points to an unnecessary loss of life (a point he picks up again in a later stanza) as well as the senselessness of the killings. Yeats emphasises his repeated charge at the end of the 'stanza, that, as a result of the execution of the Easter Rising leaders, "A terrible beauty is born" (40).

The third stanza differs from the first two stanzas by abandoning the first-person narrative of "I" and moving to the natural realm of streams, clouds, and birds. The speaker elaborates on the theme of change ("Minute by minute they change (48) ... Changes minute by minute" (50)) and introduces the symbol of the stone, which opens and closes the stanza. Unlike the majority of images presented in this stanza, of clouds moving, seasons changing, horse-hoof sliding, which are characterized by their transience, the stone is a symbol of permanence. Yeats compares the fixedness of the revolutionaries' purpose to that of the stone, their hearts are said to be "enchanted to a stone" (43). The stone disturbs or "trouble [s]" "the living stream" (44), a metaphor for how the steadfastness of the revolutionaries' purpose contrasts sharply with the shifting transience of popular moods. The singularity of their purpose, leading to their ultimate

deaths, cut through the complacency and indifference of everyday Irish society at the time.

W. B. Yeats

The fourth and last stanza of the poem resumes the first person narrative of the first and second stanzas. The stanza returns to the image of the stony heart: "Too long a sacrifice/Can make a stone of the heart" (57-8), Yeats wrote, putting the determined struggle of Irish republicans in the Easter Rising in the context of the long, turbulent history of British colonialism in Ireland, as well as alluding to the immense psychological costs of the long struggle for independence. Indeed, the narrator cries, "O when may it suffice?", and answering his own question with the line, "That is heaven's part" (making an allusion to Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*— the parallel line occurs in Act I, scene V, regarding Gertrude's guilt: "Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven"). In Yeats's schema, Heaven's role is to determine when the suffering will end and when the sacrifices are considered 'sufficient' (59-60); whilst the role of the people left behind is to forever remember the names of those who had fallen in order to properly lay their wandering spirits to rest: "our part/ To murmur name upon name,/as a mother names her child/ when sleep at last has come/On limbs that had run wild." (60-3).

In the second half of the last stanza, the narrator wonders aloud whether the sacrifices were indeed warranted: "Was it needless deaths after all?" (67), contemplating the possibility that the British might still allow the Home Rule Act 1914 to come into force without the uprising. However, Yeats made the point that what's done is done. All that is important is to remember the revolutionaries' dream and carry on: "We know their dream; enough/To know they dreamed and are dead." There is no point arguing over whether these revolutionaries should or shouldn't have acted so rashly for their cause as they did: "And what if excess of love/bewildered them till they died?" These are some of the most poignant lines in the poem. The phrase "excess of love" (72) also recalls the character of Oisín in Yeats's long poem "The Wanderings of Oisín."

In the end, the narrator resigns to commemorating the names of those fallen revolutionary figures, viz. Thomas MacDonagh, John MacBride, James Connolly and Patrick Pearse, as eternal heroes of the Irish Republican movement (symbolised by the colour green), with Yeats adapting the final refrain to reflect the price these people paid to change the course of Irish history :

"I write it out in a verse
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,

Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born."

The extent to which Yeats was willing to eulogize the members of the Easter Rising can be seen in his usage of "green" (78) to commemorate said members above, even though he generally abhors the use of the colour green as a political symbol (Yeats's abhorrence is such that he forbade green as the color of the binding of his books). In commemorating the names of the revolutionaries in eloquent lamentation in the final stanza, including even his love rival Major John MacBride, Yeats reconciled his personal private sentiments towards some of the individuals involved with the larger nationalist sentiments upheld and championed by the poem, even if there were revolutionaries whose strategies he didn't fully agree with. Yeats has an interesting perspective on the historical significance of his poem, adding to the tension of his recording. The revolutionaries "now and in time to be (77)... are changed, changed utterly" (79) — the knowledge of which shows Yeats's astute insight into the historical importance of his poetic memorial of these revolutionary figures.

Interestingly, the date of the Easter Rising can be seen in the structure of the poem also: there are 16 lines (for 1916) in the first and third stanzas, 24 lines (for April 24, the date the Rising began) in the second and fourth stanzas, and four stanzas in total (which refers to April, the fourth month of the year).

SUMMARY

The poem begins by paying tribute to the Irish people for leaving behind their previously mundane, trivial lives to dedicate themselves to the fight for independence. In lines which become a refrain, Yeats proclaims, "All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born."

The second stanza singles out individual martyrs, killed or imprisoned for their activities, among them his childhood friend Countess Markiewicz and Major John MacBride, the husband of Maud Gonne, the woman Yeats had loved long and unrequited. Although he had considered MacBride merely "a drunken, vainglorious lout," Yeats acknowledges that he too has been ennobled by his heroism.

Stanza 3 notes paradoxically that these martyrs are all changed in that they have become unchanging: their hearts, united by one purpose, have become unchanging as stone, in disturbing contrast to the living stream of ordinary human life. In a characteristic shift of mood, Yeats uses the stone

metaphor to warn of the danger of fanaticism: "Too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart."

W. B. Yeats

The final stanza raises but quickly abandons essentially unanswerable questions about the duration and value of the Irish struggle and the trustworthiness of England's promise of independence. Instead Yeats confines himself to the more modest task of paying tribute to the fallen patriots by naming them with the tenderness of a mother naming her child. While acknowledging the awful finality of death, Yeats proclaims the meaningfulness of their enterprise, in which they doffed the "motley" of their former clownish days to don green in a life both terrible and beautiful in its purpose.

With rare compression, Yeats not only succeeds in expressing his ambivalence about patriotism in general and about the Irish cause in particular, but he also allows the reader to follow sympathetically, the shifts of thought and feeling in the troubled mind of a poet who is both critical and compassionate.

Check your progress

4. Write about the setting of the poem, "Easter 1916".

A DIALOGUE OF SELF AND SOUL

POEM

I

My Soul, I summon to the winding ancient stair;
Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,
Upon the broken, crumbling battlement,
Upon the breathless starlit air,
Self-Instructional Material 21

NOTES

"Upon the star that marks the hidden pole;
Fix every wandering thought upon
That quarter where all thought is done:
Who can distinguish darkness from the soul

My Self. The consecrated blade upon my knees
Is Sato's ancient blade, still as it was,

Still razor-keen, still like a looking-glass
Unspotted by the centuries;
That flowering, silken, old embroidery, torn
From some court-lady's dress and round
The woden scabbard bound and wound
Can, tattered, still protect, faded adorn

My Soul. Why should the imagination of a man
Long past his prime remember things that are
Emblematical of love and war?
Think of ancestral night that can,
If but imagination scorn the earth
And intellect is wandering
To this and that and t'other thing,
Deliver from the crime of death and birth.

My self. Montashigi, third of his family, fashioned it
Five hundred years ago, about it lie
Flowers from I know not what embroidery —
Heart's purple — and all these I set
For emblems of the day against the tower
Emblematical of the night,
And claim as by a soldier's right
A charter to commit the crime once more.

My Soul. Such fullness in that quarter overflows
And falls into the basin of the mind
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
For intellect no longer knows
I, /s from the I, *Ought*, or I *knower* from the I *Known* —
That is to say, ascends to Heaven;
Only the dead can be forgiven;
But when I think of that my tongue's a stone.

II

My Self. A living man is blind and drinks his drop.

What matter if the ditches are impure?

What matter if I live it all once more?

Endure that toil of growing up;

The ignominy of boyhood; the distress

Of boyhood changing into man;

The unfinished man and his pain

Brought face to face with his own clumsiness;

The finished man among his enemies? —

How in the name of Heaven can he escape

That defiling and disfigured shape

The mirror of malicious eyes

Casts upon his eyes until at last

He thinks that shape must be his shape?

And what's the good of an escape

If honour find him in the wintry blast?

I am content to live it all again

And yet again, if it be life to pitch

, Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,

A blind man battering blind men;

Or into that most fecund ditch of all,

The folly that man does

Or must suffer, if he woos

A proud woman not kindred of his soul.

I am content to follow to its source

Every event in action or in thought;

Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!

When such as I cast out remorse

So great a sweetness flows into the breast

We must laugh and we must sing,

We are blest by everything,

Everything we look upon is blest.

SUMMARY

In the first stanza the Soul calls the reader to the tower of learning where "the star," the most distant part of our universe, "marks the hidden pole." The soul seems to be talking about the contemplation of eternity. On the other hand, the poem itself seems to imply that the soul's goal is so vague as to be virtually unknowable. "Thought," as represented by the tower, cannot distinguish "darkness from the soul." In a later poem Yeats says the tower is "half dead at the top." If we see the tower as an individual, as a source of knowledge, this would seem to imply that there is no more original thought there. If, on the other hand, we see the tower as a phallic symbol, it has become impotent.

In the second stanza, self says it holds an ancient Japanese blade wrapped in a piece of embroidered silk. As pointed out in the next stanza, these seem to be symbols of war and love. The sword can stand for the blood that has been spilled, while the dress seems to have been given to the samurai put of love. The sword also seems to represent self-discovery, "a looking glass," where man discovers his penchant for violence. The silken embroidery represents art, one thing many romanticists felt transcended time.

Soul argues that these are foolish symbols, and that if imagination would just "scorn the earth" (perhaps, instead, contemplate how many angels can dance on the head of a pin or meditate on its navel) and intellect would quit wandering from topic to topic, then together they could deliver us from the "crime of death and birth," suggesting a Buddhist-like escape from the cycle of eternal rebirth.

In the fourth stanza, Self sets purple flowers the color of the heart and the sword, with its implied blood, against the darkness that the tower represents. Passion, in and of itself, Yeats seems to suggest can make life meaningful. We shouldn't try to avoid life and death; we should live it passionately.

Soul finally argues that when intellect and imagination are focused on philosophy that intellect no longer knows Is from Ought or Knower from Known and that is like ascending to Heaven. It's obvious that Yeats is a Romantic and believes in the power of intuition, not rational arguments. Part II of the poem is spoken entirely by the Self. Luckily, it needs little explanation. It is a celebration of life itself, though a rather strange celebration, no doubt, by some people's standards. No matter how miserable our life has been, the narrators argues, if we follow it to its source, measure the lot, and forgive ourselves for our mistakes, we will transcend those mistakes and become "blest."

Part of the power of the poem comes from our realization that, we, too, have suffered most of these indignities. Who hasn't felt the awkwardness of childhood, or the fears of becoming a man or woman, and fear of enemies who would have our job? How can we escape the hurtful image that malicious acquaintances project onto us at different times of life? The power of the poem, of course, also comes from the power of the description, not the mere intellectual argument. Lines like ... if it be life to pitch/Into the frogspawn of a blind man's ditch,/A blind man battering blind men" are the kinds of lines that can stay with you for years. Equally amazing is how these lines can be transformed into the optimistic lines that the poem ends with: "We must laugh and we must sing/We are blest by everything/Everything we look upon is blest." Yeats must have been blessed by the blarney stone to compose lines this magnificent.

Analysis

Self-imagery in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats The first aim of W. B. Yeats's

self-characterizations is to dramatize his personality a self-referential with direct, passionate speech. His strategies differ according to the subject, theme, and occasion, but his self-referential poems show how autobiography (with linked images and allusions) informs the carefully arranged mythology of his personal utterance. To achieve this passionate personal utterance, Yeats adopts a poetic mask to present a credible, unsentimental, discursive tone. Without the mask as a distancing device, Yeats's self-characterizations could easily degenerate into mere self-expression. The artifice of an extroverted persona (his anti-self) allows him an emotional buffer between personal passion and self-pity. One way he gets his points across without hand wringing is to exploit a grammatical demarcation. In "Adam's Curse," for example, Yeats objectifies the toil and pain of creating poetry and beauty by using the plural pronouns "we" and "us." Even the "I" that closes the last stanza in the historical present sounds more statemental than subjective. To realize how drastically the mode of self-characterization determines the poem's tone (and thus its emotive message) one could change the voice to the first person: "A line will take me hours" or "My stitching and unstitching." Yeats's strategy for using himself in this poem or that calls for dramatizing rather than sympathizing. Such self-characterizations highlight an attitude or theme without spotlighting the speaker as a wholly self-referential "I and only I." Yeats characterizes himself in "Adam's Curse" as lover and poet discussing with Maude Gonne and another woman elevated notions of rigor and style in poetry, beauty, and love. In one of the Yeats-Gonne variations, love diminishes over time like the pastel, hollowed moon. More significantly, "Adam's Curse" marks a turning point in Yeats's style of self-projection from the pastoral manifesto of "The Happy Shepherd" and symbol-brocaded "The Wanderings of Oisín"

to a conversational tone and modernized form. Yeats carries several arrows in his rhetorical quiver. In "The Cold Heaven" the crossed-love theme surfaces within a sudden epiphany of a cosmic over-arching, an incident of dreaming-back after death (an occult notion elaborated in *A Vision*), and a closing question. The strategy of "A Prayer for My Daughter," on the other hand, takes advantage of the conventions of address inherent in an apostrophe. "The Tower" tumbles through an acceptable testamentary discursiveness, and "Dialogue of Self and Soul" uses the strategy of an interior debate to introduce a Nietzschean dithyramb of tragic joy and cyclic recurrence.

If "Adam's Curse" represents a change in Yeats's style, "Dialogue of Self and Soul" represents a change in his attitude. He dramatizes his own internal conflicts as opposites and reconciles them with a Dionysian credo. Self-mastery replaces lamentation. Sato's blade, an unspotted soul-symbol, replaces pastel weariness, remorse, and longing. Heaven is no longer cold. Ecstatic recurrence replaces unforgiving punishment; reality replaces romantic dreaminess and dislocated desire. Instead of a battered kettle in "The Tower" the body becomes the sheaf of the timeless sword-as-soul. "Dialogue of Self and Soul" also exemplifies one of Yeats's favorite modes of self-characterization—summoning memories to maintain a coherent context for his self-characterizations, and thereby dramatizing his evolving outlook. Friends and associates serve as supporting actors; concrete items in his daily life—restored tower, Sato's blade, the wind off the coast—become emblems or props in complex meditative poems.

Over time, his self-characterization becomes something of a self-institutionalization—he carries his own frame of public reference. Yeats's poems enumerates old themes well before he writes "The Circus Animals'

Desertion." The specimen poems here, especially "The Tower" and "Dialogue of Self and Soul," enumerate themes found in poems only; the wayward circus animals emblemize themes found in his narrative and dramatic writings. In "A Prayer for My Daughter" Yeats dramatizes public and internal opposites to show his way with of thinking and feeling. From his convulsive experience with Maude Gonne's violent politics he draws the antitheses of those aristocratic qualities he invokes for his daughter—beauty, custom, ceremony, innocence, kindness, emotional balance, and domestic rootedness—symbolized by the centered, sheltering, spreading laurel tree. Cf. the chestnut tree in "Among School Children." His self-characterization, based on the old dictum that the style is the man, includes a compulsive interweaving of images and symbols as a recurrent, personalized code. The prayer that his daughter avoid social turmoil and political hatred illustrates the role of accumulated self-characterization as one of the apparent objections of his poetry. In this sense, his poems cannot

be isolated Without a contextual loss. Precedents from old books in "Adam's Curse" become the precedents from Yeats's own previous books of poetry. Thus, it is insufficient to read "A Prayer for My Daughter" without the context and carry-over connotations from Yeats's anguishing Maude Gonne poems, nasty public controversies, feminine militancy, and Dublin's political paltriness. Similarly, the virtues he envisions for his daughter incorporate his self-dramatizations in a dozen poems idealizing the aristocratic environs of the Gregorys' Coole Park. The central point is that Yeats's self-characterizations are not supplements to the poems but increments to his ideal of the unity of self.

Check your progress

5. Comment on the first stanza of the poem, "Dialogue of self and soul".

THE TOWER

Sailing to Byzantium

I

THAT is no country for old men. The young
 In one another's arms, birds in the trees
 —Those dying generations—at their song,
 The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
 Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
 Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
 Caught in that sensual music all neglect
 Monuments of unageing intellect.
 An aged man is but a paltry thing,
 A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
 Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
 For every tatter in its mortal dress,
 Nor is there singing school but studying
 Monuments of its own magnificence;
 And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
 To the holy city of Byzantium.
 O sages standing in God's holy fire

As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.
Once out Of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.
WHAT shall I do with this absurdity —
O heart, O troubled heart — this caricature,
Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail?
Never had I more
Excited, passionate, fantastical
Imagination, nor an ear and eye
That more expected the impossible —
No, not in boyhood when with rod and fly,
Or the humbler worm, I climbed Ben Bulbin's back
And had the livelong summer day to spend.
It seems that I must bid the Muse go pack,
Choose Plato and Plotinus for a friend
Until imagination, ear and eye,
Can be content with argument and deal
In abstract things; or be derided by
A sort of battered kettle at the heel.
I pace upon the battlements and stare
On the foundations of a house, or where

Tree, like a sooty finger, starts from the earth;
And send imagination forth
Under the day's declining beam, and call
Images and memories
From ruin or from ancient trees,
For I would ask a question of them all.
Beyond that ridge lived Mrs. French, and once
When every silver candlestick or sconce
Lit up the dark mahogany and the wine.
A serving-man, that could divine
That most respected lady's every wish,
Ran and with the garden shears
Clipped an insolent farmer's ears
And brought them in a little covered dish.
Some few remembered still when I was young
A peasant girl commended by a Song,
Who'd lived somewhere upon that rocky place,
And praised the colour of her face,
And had the greater joy in praising her,
Remembering that, if walked she there,
Farmers jostled at the fair
So great a glory did the song confer.
And certain men, being maddened by those rhymes,
Or else by toasting her a score of times,
Rose from the table and declared it right
To test their fancy by their sight;
But they mistook the brightness of the moon
For the prosaic light of day—
Music had driven their wits astray—
And one was drowned in the great bog of Cloone.
Strange, but the man who made the song was blind;
Yet, now I have considered it, I find
That nothing strange; the tragedy began
With Homer that was a blind man,

And Helen has all living hearts betrayed.
O may the moon and sunlight seem
One inextricable beam,
For if I triumph I must make men mad.
And I myself created Hanrahan
And drove him drunk or sober through the dawn
From somewhere in the neighbouring clittages.
Caught by an old man's juggleries
He stumbled, tumbled, fumbled to and fro
And had but broken knees for hire
And horrible splendour of desire;
I thought it all out twenty years ago:
Good fellows shuffled cards in an old bawn;
And when that ancient ruffian's turn was on
He so bewitched the cards under his thumb
That all but the one card became
A pack of hounds and not a pack of cards,
And that he changed into a hare.
Hanrahan rose in frenzy there
And followed up those baying creatures towards —
O towards I have forgotten what — enough!
I must recall a man that neither love' '6)
Nor music nor an enemy's clipped ear
Could, he was so harried, cheer;
A figure that has grown so fabulous
There's not a neighbour left to say
When he finished his dog's day:
An ancient bankrupt master of this house.
Before that ruin came, for centuries,
Rough men-at-arms, cross-gartered to the knees
Or shod in iron, climbed the narrow stairs,
And certain men-at-arms there were
Whose images, in the Great Memory stored,
Come with loud cry and panting breast

To break upon a sleeper's rest
While their great wooden dice beat on the board.
As I would question all, come all who can;
Come old, necessitous, half-mounted man;
And bring beauty's blind rambling celebrant;
The red man the juggler sent
Through God-forsaken meadows; Mrs. French,
Gifted with so fine an ear;
The man drowned in a bog's mire,
When mocking Muses chose the country wench.
Did all old men and women, rich and poor,
Who trod upon these rocks or passed this door,
Whether in public or in secret rage
As I do now against old age?
But I have found an answer in those eyes
That are impatient to be gone;
Go therefore; but leave Hanrahan,
For I need all his mighty memories.
Old lecher with a love on every wind,
Bring up out of that deep considering mind
All that you have discovered in the grave,
For it is certain that you have
Reckoned up every unforeknown, unseeing
plunge, lured by a softening eye,
Or by a touch or a sigh,
Into the labyrinth of another's being;
Does the imagination dwell the most
Upon a woman won or woman lost?
If on the lost, admit you turned aside
From a great labyrinth out of pride,
Cowardice, some silly over-subtle thought
Or anything called conscience once;
And that if memory recur, the sun's
Under eclipse and the day blotted out.

III

It is time that I wrote my will;
I choose upstanding men
That climb the streams until
The fountain leap, and tit dawn
Drop their cast at the side
Of dripping stone; I declare
They shall inherit my pride,
The pride of people that were
Bound neither to Cause nor to State.
Neither to slaves that were spat on,
Nor to the tyrants that spat,
The people of Burke and of Grattan
That gave, though free to refuse —
pride, like that of the morn,
When the headlong light is loose,
Or that of the fabulous horn,
Or that of the sudden shower
When all streams are dry,
Or that of the hour
When the swan must fix his eye
Upon a fading gleam,
Float out upon a long
Last reach of glittering stream
And there sing his last song.
And I declare my faith:
I mock plotinus' thought
And cry in plato's teeth,
Death and life were not
Till man made up the whole,
Made lock, stock and barrel
Out of his bitter soul,
Aye, sun and moon and star, all;

And further add to that
That, being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar paradise.
I have prepared my peace
With learned Italian things
And the proud stones of Greece,
Poet's imaginings
And memories of love,
Memories of the words of women,
All those things whereof
Man makes a superhuman,
Mirror-resembling dream.
As at the loophole there
The daws chatter and scream,
And drop twigs layer upon layer.
When they have mounted up,
The mother bird will rest
On their hollow top,
And so warm her wild nest.
I leave both faith and pride
To young upstanding men
Climbing the mountain-side,
That under bursting dawn
They may drop a fly;
Being of that metal made
Till it was broken by
This sedentary trade.
Now shall I make my soul,
Compelling it to study
In a learned school
Till the wreck of body,
Slow decay of blood,
Testy delirium

Or dull decrepitude,
Or what worse evil come —
The death of friends, or death
Of every brilliant eye
That made a catch in the breath —
Seem but the clouds of the sky
When the horizon fades;
Or a bird's sleepy cry
Among the deepening shades.

Summary

The speaker describes the absurdity of the contrast between his old body and his young spirit. He feels more passionate and inspired than ever - even more so than when he was a boy and went fishing in the mountains of Western Ireland. Nevertheless, he feels he must say goodbye to poetry and choose reason instead: it is more becoming to his age. He walks to and fro atop a castle and looks out over the countryside. He sees where the wealthy Mrs. French once lived. Her servant, who knew her wishes well, once cut off the ears of a rude farmer and brought them to her on a covered dish.

When the speaker was young, some men spoke of a legendary peasant girl, who was the most beautiful in the area. One drunk man talked of her often, and in the middle of a drinking session got up to seek her out. He mistook the moon for her lovely face, and drowned in a lake. The man who told the speaker these songs was blind, like Homer.

The girl may well be mistaken for the sun or moon, because, says the speaker, she has betrayed all living men. The speaker himself created Hanrahan twenty years ago. The character was destined to stumble through villages, lamed. When it was the speaker's turn at cards, he shuffled the pack into a pack of hounds, which then turned into a hare. Hanrahan followed these creatures.

The speaker interrupts his own story, crying "enough!" He must remember a man so distraught that neither love nor music nor clipped ears could make him feel better. This man is a ruined master of the house. Before the house went to ruin, servants dressed for war came to the house. The speaker questioned them all, wondering whether they raged against age as he now does. They give no satisfactory answer. The speaker is happy to be left with Hanrahan. He calls up Hanrahan, from the knowledgeable dead, to tell him whether one thinks more often of a woman won or lost. A woman, once lost, is an irretrievable mistake.

The speaker draws up his will, leaving men who fish tirelessly his pride. His pride is not political or tied up with slaves or tyrants, but that of Grattan and Burke. His pride as refreshing as an unexpected shower, as poignant as a swansong. He mocks Plato and Plotinus. He is prepared to die with a combination of ancient poetry and of the love of women, both of which make man a superhuman. He leaves his faith and pride to these young fishermen. He will now prepare his body and his mind for death, or, worse, the death of those whom he has loved.

Analysis

In one of the most complicated poems of his career, Yeats tries to come to terms with his age and with the changes his country is undergoing. "The Tower" is presented in a fragmented style, a proto-modernist device that shows Yeats' move away from romantic Irish mythology toward a sparser approach. This change was partially affected by his friendship with Ezra Pound, who encouraged Yeats to seek out alternatives to the flowery language that characterized his earlier collections.

The ideal of manhood and youth is introduced in the first stanza through the representation of the speaker: a young man. This image is pastoral, with the young man fishing in the fertile streams of Ireland. The iconic mountain of Ben Bulbin tells the reader that this is western Ireland, where Yeats used to have his vacation during summers away from London. The speaker's turn to Plato and reason seems forced. Put together with the narrative element of cutting off the farmer's ears, the implication is that the speaker's decision is unnatural and made in a top-down fashion. The poet can impose rules on himself, just as the rich can on the poor.

The lovely peasant girl, whom the speaker also refers to as Helen (as in Helen of Troy), is undoubtedly Maude Gonne. Gonne, a revolutionary who was the great love of Yeats' life, did not return his love. She appears often in Yeats' poetry, often symbolized by or associated with a moon: something lovely, feminine, untouchable, and capable of causing madness. The peasant who drowns in pursuit of her is proof of her power.

The speaker breaks away from the narrative of the girl to present a new character who meets a similarly grim fate. This is yet another modernist device. The speaker breaks down the illusion that the poem is or could be truthful, and displays his ability to create characters at will. Hanrahan is an intertextual character, appearing in other Yeats works. He is an Irish peasant everyman, suffering the afflictions of lameness (whether physical or moral) and alcoholism that were rampant in early 20th-century Ireland. Hanrahan shows a flash of glory, however, in the transfiguration of cards into a pack of hounds. This is an allusion to Cuchulain's (a famous hero of Irish mythology) hounds, which were part of his army. These are

quickly turned into a hare, an object of English-style hunting, so the peasant's empowerment is all too brief.

The hare symbol transitions into a description of a great house. In Ireland, a large ruined or empty house always refers to the Protestant Ascendancy: English families that lived in Ireland and formed ruling elite. Most of these manors were destroyed by the IRA during the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-1921. In "The Tower," ghosts of warlike men haunt the house, and it is these ghosts, as well as other people who were old in the speaker's childhood, that he queries about age. They do not wish to answer, so he dismisses their memory, saying he needs only Hanrahan to answer. The poem finishes with the question of Maude Gonne again. Even a reader who does not know the biographical details can read in the title of the poem that Yeats is in mourning over a lost woman. The phallic image is as lonely as can be.

Major Themes

Magic

Magic is the primary spiritual form in this collection, replacing religion as a place to turn in a time of distress. Yeats was brought up in a Protestant family, but turned to theosophy when he became an intellectual. Theosophy, a set of beliefs that declares that all religions hold some measure of truth, tends toward the fantastical in practice. Yeats attended seances and exercised what he called "automatic writing": writing funneled through a poet. These magical trappings are evident in many poems in *The Tower*, including the speaker's ability to call on the "sages" in "Sailing to Byzantium" or the ghosts in "All Souls' Night."

Magic provides one possible solution to the crisis that the poet puzzles over throughout this collection: aging. As he points out in "The Fool by the Roadside," only a fool thinks that life can be made to go from the end point to the beginning, instead of the other way around. But the poet casts himself as this fool, and it seems to be his earnest wish to reverse the life cycle. When he is attended upon by the sages in "Sailing to Byzantium," a reversal, a rebirth, does seem possible. The poet will be reborn through healing fire, like the phoenix.

Fishing

The activity of fishing appears throughout this collection as a metaphor for youth, life, and health. Yeats uses it to counteract the images of aging. The most common variation on the image of "tattered rags on a stick," is the inverse of fishing. Instead of controlling the rod, a symbol of virility, the aged man is himself trapped, no longer the fisher but the fished.

Fishing holds not only a symbolic but also a historical significance for Yeats, who used to fish during his childhood in the hills of County Sligo.

The fish leaping in the water is a common trope for fertility, and Yeats' special mention of salmon leaping upstream is biologically correct (there are many salmon in Irish rivers) and also a possible comment on the Irishman's stubborn and heroic nature. In "The Tower," Yeats leaves the fishermen his pride in his "will." Although he is no longer one of the young, he seems to identify with and admire them.

Destruction

In keeping with the collection's more general theme of death, Yeats supplements the images of decay with those of active destruction. In addition to nature and time playing an active part in the destruction of the human body, other humans may also choose to destroy one another. In many poems, the speaker seems afraid of the former and horrified by the later.

Part of the horror of destruction is an intrinsic belief in the goodness of beauty and the human body. In "Nineteen Hundred Nineteen," Yeats describes the destruction of an ancient statue and the mob's complete disregard for its beauty or historical significance. Of course the more salient destruction that the IRA and the Black and Tans (they, too, in many senses could be considered a mob) carried out was killings. In mourning the destruction of a beautiful statue, the poet creates a symbol for the slain human and affirms its beauty and significance. Images of destruction, whether they be killings as in "Meditations in a Time of Civil War" or less direct references, appear most frequently in the more political poems in this collection.

The Moon

The moon appears so often in this collection that its significance must be weighed. It is the counter symbol to the destruction that plagues much of the rest of the collection; it is the female force. But although it is a peaceful symbol, the moon also has an edge of danger.

Yeats often compares the moon to a beautiful woman, or draws parallels with Maude Gonne, the woman who refused to love him back. Yeats plays on the word "lunacy" to support the ancient myth that madness and the moon were tied together. This, together with the moon's feminine associations, implies that women, too may drive men mad. This is in keeping with the theme of unrequited lust.

Unrequited Lust

Many poets write of unrequited love, but Yeats, in this collection, confronts unrequited lust. Part of the experience of aging seems to be the loss of physical attractiveness. In "A Man Young and Old," the speaker mourns, "My arms are like the twisted thorns/ And yet there beauty lay." The speaker has been in and out of love, but desire for young women still

remains. This is part of the contradiction of a young spirit trapped in an old man's body.

Yeats uses the word "lecher" to describe a person in this situation; it is clear that although he mentions this sort of lust in many of the poems he is aware of the moral aspect of the unequal lust. In "Owen Aherne and his dancers" it seems there is a possibility a young girl might "mistake her childish gratitude for love," but the speaker resolves to "let her choose a young man and all for his wild sake." His strongly expressed desire, not fully but half returned, makes this ending seem generous and self-denying. This resolution does not, however, prevent this sort of desire from reoccurring in other poems.

Immortality and Classicism

A poet so preoccupied with the issue of aging is naturally also preoccupied by the issue of immortality. Critics have explained the shift away from Irish and toward Classical mythology, once again, with Yeats' friendship with Pound and his interest in the modernist literary movement. Putting this aside, however, Irish mythology is much more vague about immortality than Greek or Latin: in which the gods, and some of their favored mortals, live forever. This may explain the hopeful color that references to Juno and Athena add to some of these poems, and the explicitly classical-themed "Oedipus at Colonus."

Danger

Danger is ever-present in this collection, whether it be through age, broken heartedness, or violence. Much of Yeats' description of danger has to do with a heightened time scheme: all men age, but the speaker in "Youth and Age" seems worried about imminent death. All men die, but the speaker in "Meditations in a Time of Civil War" is likely to face sudden death at the hands of intruders.

Danger, characterized by a heightened urgency, creates uncertainty, and that is a dominant mood in *The Tower*. Continuity is represented in this collection by art, especially sculpture, which is a stand-in for culture more generally. Once this is destroyed by the mob, there is no telling what or whom the mob will destroy next. This mood is not confined to Yeats alone, but is visible in much of the literature written directly after WWI.

LEDA AND THE SWAN

POEM

A SUDDEN blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,

He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.
 How can those terrified vague fingers push
 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
 And how can body, laid in that white rush,
 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?
 A shudder in the loins engenders there
 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
 And Agamemnon dead.
 Being so caught up,
 So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
 Did she put on his knowledge with his power
 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

Summary

The speaker retells a story from Greek mythology, the rape of the girl Leda by the god Zeus, who had assumed the form of a swan. Leda felt a sudden blow, with the "great wings" of the swan still beating above her. Her thighs were caressed by "the dark webs," and the nape of her neck was caught in his bill; he held "her helpless breast upon his breast." How, the speaker asks, could Leda's "terrified vague fingers" push the feathered glory of the swan from between her thighs? And how could her body help but feel "the strange heart beating where it lies"? A shudder in the loins engenders "The broken wall, the burning roof and tower, and Agamemnon dead." The speaker wonders whether Leda, caught up by the swan and "mastered by the brute blood of the air," assumed his knowledge as well as his power "Before the indifferent beak could let her drop."

Form

"Leda and the Swan" is a sonnet, a traditional fourteen-line poem in iambic pentameter. The structure of this sonnet is Petrarchan with a clear separation between the first eight lines (the "octave") and the final six (the "sestet"), the dividing line being the moment of ejaculation—the "shudder in the loins." The rhyme scheme of the sonnet is ABAB CDCD EFGEFG.

Commentary

Like "The Second Coming," "Leda and the Swan" describes a moment that represented a change of era in Yeats's historical model of gyres, which he offers in *A Vision*, his mystical theory of the universe. But where "The Second Coming" represents (in Yeats's conception) the end of modern history, "Leda and the Swan" represents something like its beginning; as Yeats understands it, the "history" of Leda is that, raped by the god Zeus in

the form of a swan, she laid eggs, which hatched into Clytemnestra and Helen and the war-gods Castor and Polydeuces—and thereby brought about the Trojan War ("The broken wall, the burning roof and towerjAnd Agamemnon dead"). The details of the story of the Trojan War are quite elaborate: briefly, the Greek Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, was kidnapped by the Trojans, so the Greeks besieged the city of Troy; after the war, Clytemnestra, the wife of the Greek leader Agamemnon, had her husband murdered. Here, however, it is important to know only the war's lasting impact: it brought about the end of the ancient mythological era and the birth of modern history.

Also like "The Second Coming," "Leda and the Swan" is valuable more for its powerful and evocative language—which manages to imagine vividly such a bizarre phenomenon as a girl's rape by a massive swan—than for its place in Yeats's occult history of the world. As an aesthetic experience, the sonnet is remarkable; Yeats combines words indicating powerful action (sudden blow, beating, staggering, beating, shudder, mastered, burning, mastered) with adjectives and descriptive words that indicate Leda's weakness and helplessness (caressed, helpless, terrified, vague, loosening), thus increasing the sensory impact of the poem.

Analysis

This is the most famous poem in the collection, and its most intense and immediate in terms of imagery. The myth of Leda and the Swan is a familiar one from Classical mythology. Zeus fell in love with a mortal, Leda the Trojan queen, and raped her while taking on the form of a swan to protect his identity. She became pregnant with Helen of Troy. That Helen was part goddess helps to explain how her beauty brought about the destruction of two civilizations. Despite its ABAB rhyme scheme, the poem maintains a breathlessness that is partially due to enjambment, a poetic technique that Yeats uses liberally in this collection.

The impregnation in this poem has many layers. There is the physical impregnation of the girl with a daughter, but also the sense that her womb holds the blueprint for the entire Trojan War. Therefore even the rape takes on a sort of inevitability, similar to the events that the still unborn Helen will cause.

Check your progress

6. Write a note on the form of the poem, "Leda and the Swan".

POEM**I**

WALK through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way — the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.

II

I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy —
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age —
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage —
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind —
Did Quattro cento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?

And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once -- enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection- or the drug decide,
Would think her Son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But thus the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a tenable or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts — O presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolize —
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul.

Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
 Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
 O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
 Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
 O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
 How can we know the dancer from the dance?

Summary

The speaker paces around a classroom, looking at the schoolchildren. The nun says that what they learn in school is to read and to sing. They learn about history, sewing, and how to be neat "in a modern way." The children stare at the speaker, an old politician.

He dreams of a Leda-like body bent over a fire in a domestic scene. She is telling a story of how a small interaction with a child turned its day to tragedy. Together, over the story, they share a great deal. Looking at the children, he wonders what she was like at their age. He sees her as a child and is mad with love.

Her current, gaunt image comes to mind. She once was pretty, but she is now comfortable and old. Did the speaker's mother, when carrying him, know that seeing this woman would be enough compensation for her child's birth? Plato thought nature to be imperfect; Aristotle contemplated the nature of things, as did Pythagoras.. but these are all merely subjects for students to study.

Nuns and mothers adore images, but the mothers' images are their children. The speaker questions life's, very location, wondering what part of a tree is the essence of the tree, what part of a dancer is a dancer, and which is the dance itself.

Analysis

The subject matter of schoolchildren contrasts greatly with that of the earlier historical poems in this collection. Here is evidence of civil society, of progress, and of modernity - none of which were possible during the Anglo-Irish War or the Civil War. From this, and from the implication that the speaker is a senator (as Yeats was after 1924), one may deduce that this is a later poem, written from the standpoint of a more peaceful Ireland.

The children are poignant for the speaker because they are associated both with an obvious type of innocence and with the woman whom the speaker loves. By comparing her child self and her current incarnation, it is sharply evident to the speaker how she has aged. The imagined conversation between the two, in which she seems to be a schoolteacher rather than a revolutionary, is wishful thinking on his part. Yeats' musings

on whether it was destined that he should fall in love with this woman is related to "Leda and the Swan" in that it presupposes a series of events that must come to pass. The final stanza is a philosophical riddle concerning whether man acts or is acted upon, and serves as a connection to Yeats' uncertainty as to whether he loves or was destined to love.

Themes, Motifs and Symbols of W.B. Yeats

Themes

The Relationship between Art and Politics

Yeats believed that art and politics were intrinsically linked and used his writing to express his attitudes toward Irish politics, as well as to educate his readers about Irish cultural history. From an early age, Yeats felt a deep connection to Ireland and his national identity, and he thought that British rule negatively impacted Irish politics and social life. His early compilation of folklore sought to teach a literary history that had been suppressed by British rule, and his early poems were odes to the beauty and mystery of the Irish countryside. This work frequently integrated references to myths and mythic figures, including Oisín and Cúchulainn. As Yeats became more involved in Irish politics—through his relationships with the Irish National Theatre, the Irish Literary Society, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and Maud Gonne—his poems increasingly resembled political manifestos. Yeats wrote numerous poems about Ireland's involvement in World War I ("An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" [1919]; "A Meditation in Time of War" [1921]), Irish nationalists and political activists ("On a Political Prisoner" [1921], "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz" [1933]), and the Easter Rebellion ("Easter 1916" [1916]). Yeats believed that art could serve a political function: poems could both critique and comment on political events, as well as educate and inform a population.

The Impact of Fate and the Divine on History

Yeats's devotion to mysticism led to the development of a unique spiritual and philosophical system that emphasized the role of fate and historical determinism, or the belief that events have been preordained. Yeats had rejected Christianity early in his life, but his lifelong study of mythology, Theosophy, spiritualism, philosophy, and the occult demonstrate his profound interest in the divine and how it interacts with humanity. Over the course of his life, he created a complex system of spirituality, using the image of interlocking gyres (similar to spiral cones) to map out the development and reincarnation of the soul. Yeats believed that history was determined by fate and that fate revealed its plan in moments when the human and divine interact. A tone of historically determined inevitability permeates his poems, particularly in descriptions

of situations of human and divine interaction. The divine takes on many forms in Yeats's poetry, sometimes literally ("Leda and the Swan" [1923]), sometimes abstractly ("The Second Coming" [1919]). In other poems, the divine is only gestured to (as in the sense of the divine in the Byzantine mosaics in "Sailing to Byzantium" [1926]). No matter what shape it takes, the divine signals the role of fate in determining the course of history.

The Transition from Romanticism to Modernism

Yeats started his long literary career as a romantic poet and gradually evolved into a modernist poet. When he began publishing poetry in the 1880s, his poems had a lyrical, romantic style, and they focused on love, longing and loss, and Irish myths. His early writing follows the conventions of romantic verse, utilizing familiar rhyme schemes, metric patterns, and poetic structures. Although it is lighter than his later writings, his early poetry is still sophisticated and accomplished. Several factors contributed to his poetic evolution: his interest in mysticism and the occult led him to explore spiritually and philosophically complex subjects. Yeats's frustrated romantic relationship with Maud Gonne caused the starry-eyed romantic idealism of his early work to become more knowing and cynical. Additionally, his concern with Irish subjects evolved as he became more closely connected to nationalist political causes. As a result, Yeats shifted his focus from myth and folklore to contemporary politics, often linking the two to make potent statements that reflected political agitation and turbulence in Ireland and abroad. Finally, and most significantly, Yeats's connection with the changing face of literary culture in the early twentieth century led him to pick up some of the styles and conventions of the modernist poets. The modernists experimented with verse forms, aggressively engaged with contemporary politics, challenged poetic conventions and the literary tradition at large, and rejected the notion that poetry should simply be lyrical and beautiful. These influences caused his poetry to become darker, edgier, and more concise. Although he never abandoned the verse forms that provided the sounds and rhythms of his earlier poetry, there is still a noticeable shift in style and tone over the course of his career.

Motifs

Irish Nationalism and Politics

Throughout his literary career, Yeats incorporated distinctly Irish themes and issues into his work. He used his writing as a tool to comment on Irish politics and the home rule movement and to educate and inform people about Irish history and culture. Yeats also used the backdrop of the Irish countryside to retell stories and legends from Irish folklore: As he became increasingly involved in nationalist politics, his poems took on a

patriotic tone. Yeats addressed Irish politics in a variety of ways; sometimes his statements are explicit political commentary, as in "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death," in which he addresses the hypocrisy of the British use of Irish soldiers in World War I. Such poems as "Easter 1916" and "In Memory of Eva Gore Booth and Con Markiewicz" address individuals and events connected to Irish nationalist politics, while "The Second Coming" and "Leda and the Swan" subtly include the idea of Irish nationalism. In these poems, a sense of cultural crisis and conflict seeps through, even though the poems are not explicitly about Ireland.

By using images of chaos, disorder, and war, Yeats engaged in an understated commentary on the political situations in Ireland and abroad. Yeats's active participation in Irish politics informed his poetry, and he used his work to further comment on the nationalist issues of his day.

Mysticism and the Occult

Yeats had a deep fascination with mysticism and the occult, and his poetry is infused with a sense of the otherworldly, the spiritual, and the unknown. His interest in the occult began with his study of Theosophy as a young man and expanded and developed through his participation in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a mystical secret society. Mysticism figures prominently in Yeats's discussion of the reincarnation of the soul, as well as in his philosophical model of the conical gyres used to explain the journey of the soul, the passage of time, and the guiding hand of fate. Mysticism and the occult occur again and again in Yeats's poetry, most explicitly in "The Second Coming" but also in poems such as "Sailing to Byzantium" and "The Magi" (1916). The rejection of Christian principles in favor of a more supernatural approach to spirituality creates a unique flair in Yeats's poetry that impacts his discussion of history, politics, and love.

Irish Myth and Folklore

Yeats's participation in the Irish political system had origins in his interest in Irish myth and folklore. Irish myth and folklore had been suppressed by church doctrine and British control of the school system. Yeats used his poetry as a tool for re-educating the Irish population about their heritage and as a strategy for developing Irish nationalism. He retold entire folktales in epic poems and plays, such as *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889) and *The Death of Cúchulain* (1939), and used fragments of stories in shorter poems, such as "The Stolen Child" (1886), which retells a parable of fairies luring a child away from his home, and "Cúchulain's Fight with the Sea" (1925), which recounts part of an epic where the Irish folk hero Cúchulain battles his long-lost son by at the edge of the sea. Other poems deal with subjects, images, and themes culled from folklore. In "Who Goes with Fergus?" (1893) Yeats imagines a meeting with the exiled wandering

king of Irish legend, while "The Song of Wandering Aengus" (1899) captures the experiences of the lovelorn god Aengus as he searches for the beautiful maiden seen in his dreams. Most important, Yeats infused his poetry with a rich sense of Irish culture. Even poems that do not deal explicitly with subjects from myth retain powerful tinges of indigenous Irish culture. Yeats often borrowed word selection, verse form, and patterns of imagery directly from traditional Irish myth, and folklore.

Symbols

The Gyre

The gyre, a circular or conical shape, appears frequently in Yeats's poems and was developed as part of the philosophical system outlined in his book *A Vision*. At first, Yeats used the phases of the moon to articulate his belief that history was structured in terms of ages, but he later settled upon the gyre as a more useful model. He chose the image of interlocking gyres—visually represented as two intersecting conical spirals—to symbolize his philosophical belief that all things could be described in terms of cycles and patterns. The soul (or the civilization, the age, and so on) would move from the smallest point of the spiral to the largest before moving along to the other gyre. Although this is a difficult concept to grasp abstractly, the image makes sense when applied to the waxing and waning of a particular historical age or the evolution of a human life from youth to adulthood to old age. The symbol of the interlocking gyres reveals Yeats's belief in fate and historical determinism as well as his spiritual attitudes toward the development of the soul, since creatures and events must evolve according to the conical shape. With the image of the gyre, Yeats created a shorthand reference in his poetry that stood for his entire philosophy of history and spirituality.

The Swan

Swans are a common symbol in poetry, often used to depict idealized nature. Yeats employs this convention in "The Wild Swans at Coole" (1919), in which the regal birds represent an unchanging, flawless ideal. In "Leda and the Swan," Yeats rewrites the Greek myth of Zeus and Leda to comment, on fate and historical inevitability: Zeus disguises himself as a swan to rape the unsuspecting Leda. In this poem, the bird is fearsome and destructive, and it possesses a divine power that violates Leda and initiates the dire consequences of war and devastation depicted in the final lines. Even though Yeats clearly states that the swan is the god Zeus, he also emphasizes the physicality of the swan: the beating wings, the dark webbed feet, the long neck and beak. Through this description of its physical characteristics the swan becomes a violent divine force. By rendering a well-known poetic symbol as violent and terrifying rather than idealized

and beautiful, Yeats manipulates poetic conventions, an act of literary modernism, and adds to the power of the poem.

The Great Beast

Yeats employs the figure of a great beast—a horrific, violent animal—to embody difficult abstract concepts. The great beast as a symbol comes from Christian iconography, in which it represents evil and darkness. In "The Second Coming," the great beast emerges from the Spiritus Mundi, or soul of the universe, to function as the primary image of destruction in the poem. Yeats describes the onset of apocalyptic events in which the "blood-dimmed tide is loosed" and the "ceremony of innocence is drowned" as the world enters a new age and falls apart as a result of the widening of the historical gyres. The speaker predicts the arrival of the Second Coming, and this prediction summons a "vast image" of a frightening monster pulled from the collective consciousness of the world. Yeats modifies the well-known image of the sphinx to embody the poem's vision of the climactic coming. By rendering the terrifying prospect of disruption and change into an easily imagined horrifying monster, Yeats makes an abstract fear become tangible and real. The great beast slouches toward Bethlehem to be born, where it will evolve into a second Christ (or anti-Christ) figure for the dark new age. In this way, Yeats uses distinct, concrete imagery to symbolize complex ideas about the state of the modern world.

SUMMARY

- Yeats' early poetry drew heavily on Irish myth and folklore, his later work was engaged with more contemporary issues, and his style underwent a dramatic transformation. His work can be divided into three general periods. The early poems are lushly pre-Raphaelite in tone, self-consciously ornate, and, at times, according to unsympathetic critics, stilted. Yeats began by writing epic poems such as *The Isle of Statues* and *The Wanderings of Oisín*. After *Oisín*, he never attempted another long poem. His other early poems are lyrics on the themes of love or mystical and esoteric subjects. Yeats' middle period saw him abandon the pre-Raphaelite character of his early work and attempt to turn himself into a Landor-style social ironist.
- Critics who admire his middle work might characterize it as supple and muscular in its rhythms and sometimes harshly modernist, while others find these poems barren and weak in imaginative power. Yeats' later work found new imaginative inspiration in the mystical system he began to work out for himself under the influence of spiritualism. In many ways, this poetry is a return to the vision of his earlier work. The opposition between the worldly-minded man of the sword and the

spiritually-minded man of God, the theme of *The Wanderings of Oisín*, is reproduced in *A Dialogue between Self and Soul*.

W. B. Yeats

KEY WORDS

1. Revelation

In religion and theology, revelation is the revealing or disclosing, through active or passive communication with a supernatural or a divine entity.

2. Anarchy

Anarchy may refer to any of several political states, and has been variously defined by sources.

3. Easter

Easter is the central feast in the Christian liturgical year.

4. Treason

Treason is the crime that covers some of the more serious acts of betrayal of one's sovereign or nation.

5. Byzantium

Byzantium was an ancient Greek city, founded by Greek colonists from Megara in 667 BC and named after their king Byzas.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. "The Second Coming" is easily one of the most famous and frequently quoted poems in all of Western literature. Several famous prose writers have used lines from W.B. Yeats's poems as titles to their books, and "The Second Coming" is no exception.

2. "The Second Coming" is written in a very rough iambic pentameter, but the meter is so loose, and the exceptions so frequent, that it actually seems closer to free verse with frequent heavy stresses. The rhymes are likewise haphazard; apart from the two couplets with which the poem opens, there are only coincidental rhymes in the poem, such as "man" and "sun."

3. "Sailing to Byzantium" is the first poem in a collection called *The Tower*, published in 1928. Perhaps it is the most famous single poem in this collection. Its main concern is aging, passing time and man's mortality. The poem shows how an old man solves the problem of age, death and regeneration.

4. The poem begins by paying tribute to the Irish people for leaving behind their previously mundane, trivial lives to dedicate themselves to the

fight for independence. In lines which become a refrain, Yeats proclaims, "All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born."

5. In the first stanza the Soul calls the reader to the tower of learning where "the star," the most distant part of our universe, "marks the hidden pole." The soul seems to be talking about the contemplation of eternity. On the other hand, the poem itself seems to imply that the soul's goal is so vague as to be virtually unknowable. "Thought," as represented by the tower, cannot distinguish "darkness from the soul."

6. *Leda and the Swan* is a sonnet, a traditional fourteen-line poem in iambic pentameter. The structure of this sonnet is Petrarchan with a clear separation between the first eight lines (the "octave") and the final six (the "sestet"), the dividing line being the moment of ejaculation—the "shudder in the loins." The rhyme scheme of the sonnet is ABAB CDCD EFGEFG.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Write down the critical analysis of the poem, "Second coming".
2. Describe the critical summary of the poem, "Sailing to Byzantium".
3. Discuss the religious aspects in the poem, "Easter 1916".
4. Examine the major themes of the poem, "The Tower".
5. Write an essay on the superstitious aspects of W.B. Yeats.
6. Enumerate the summary of the poem, "Among School children".
7. Critically appreciate the poem, "Dialogue between the soul and self".

FURTHER READINGS

- The Collected poems of W.B. Yeats—William Butler Yeats.
- Collected Poems—William Blake & Yeats.
- A Commentary on the collected poems of W.B. Yeats.—Alexander Norman Jeffares.
- W.B. Yeats: a critical introduction—Stan Smith.

UNIT-II

T.S. Eliot

T.S. ELIOT

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Learning Objectives
- Introduction
- The Waste Land
- Summary
- Key Words
- Answers to Check Your Progress
- Review Questions
- Further Readings

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the structure and style of T.S. Eliot's Poems
- explain the parts of the poem, "The Waste Land"
- discuss the theme of the poem, "The Waste Land".

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Stearns Eliot (September 26, 1888 — January 4, 1965) was an American-born English poet, playwright, and literary critic, arguably the most important English-language poet of the 20th century. The poem that made his name, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*—started in 1910 and published in Chicago in 1915—is regarded as a masterpiece of the modernist movement. He followed this with what have become some of the best-known poems in the English language, including *Gerontion* (1920), *The Waste Land* (1922), *The Hollow Men* (1925), *Ash Wednesday* (1930), and *Four Quartets* (1945). He is also known for his seven plays, particularly *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Eliot went east for college and was educated at Harvard. After graduation, he studied philosophy at the Sorbonne for a year, then won a scholarship to Oxford in 1914. An

expatriate, he became a British citizen at the age of 39. "My poetry has obviously more in common with my distinguished contemporaries in America than with anything written in my generation in England," he said of his nationality and its role in his work. "It wouldn't be what it is, and I imagine it wouldn't be so good ... if I'd been born in England, and it wouldn't be what it is if I'd stayed in America. It's a combination of things. But in its sources, in its emotional springs, it comes from America." Eliot renounced his citizenship to the United States and said: "My mind may be American but my heart is British".

For a poet of his stature, Eliot produced a relatively small amount of poetry and he was aware of this early in his career. He wrote to J. H. Woods, one of his former Harvard professors, "My reputation in London is built upon one small volume of verse, and is kept up by printing two or three more poems in a year. The only thing that matters is that these should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event."

Typically, Eliot first published his poems individually in periodicals or in small books or pamphlets, and then collected them in books. His first collection was *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917). In 1920, he published more poems in *Ara Vos Prec* (London) and *Poems: 1920* (New York). These had the same poems (in a different order) except that "Ode" in the British edition was replaced with "Hysteria" in the American edition. In 1925, he collected *The Waste Land* and the poems in *Prufrock and Poems* into one volume and added *The Hollow Men* to form *Poems: 1909-1925*. From then on, he updated this work as *Collected Poems*. Exceptions are *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), a collection of light verse; *Poems Written in Early Youth*, posthumously published in 1967 and consisting mainly of poems published 1907-1910 in *The Harvard Advocate*, and *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*, material Eliot never intended to have published, which appeared posthumously in 1997.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

In 1915 Ezra Pound, overseas editor of *Poetry* magazine, recommended to Harriet Monroe, the magazine's founder, that she publish "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Although the character Prufrock seems to be middle-aged, Eliot wrote most of the poem when he was only 22. Its now-famous opening lines, comparing the evening sky to "a patient etherised upon a table," were considered shocking and offensive, especially at a time when Georgian Poetry was hailed for its derivations of the 19th Century Romantic Poets. The poem follows the conscious experience of a man, Prufrock (relayed in the "stream of consciousness" form characteristic of the Modernists), lamenting his physical and intellectual inertia, the lost opportunities in his life and lack of spiritual progress, with the recurrent theme of carnal love unattained. Critical opinion is divided as to whether

the narrator leaves his residence during the course of the narration. The locations described can be interpreted either as actual physical experiences, mental recollections, or as symbolic images from the sub-conscious mind, as, for example, in the refrain "In the room the women come and go." The poem's structure was heavily influenced by Eliot's extensive reading of Dante Alighieri, in the Italian, and refers to a number of literary works, including Hamlet and those of the French Symbolists.

Its reception in London can be gauged from an unsigned review in The Times Literary Supplement on June 21, 1917: "The fact that these things occurred to the mind of Mr. Eliot is surely of the very smallest importance to anyone, even to himself. They certainly have no relation to poetry..."

The Waste Land

In October 1922 Eliot published *The Waste Land* in *The Criterion*. Eliot's dedication to *il miglior fabbro* ("the better craftsman") refers to Ezra Pound's significant hand in editing and reshaping the poem from a longer Eliot manuscript to the shortened version that appears in publication. It was composed during a period of personal difficulty for Eliot—his marriage was failing, and both he and Vivienne were suffering from nervous disorders. The poem is often read as a representation of the disillusionment of the post-war generation. That year Eliot lived in Lausanne, Switzerland to take a treatment and to convalesce from a break-down. There he wrote the final section, "What the Thunder Said," which contains frequent references to mountains. Before the poem's publication as a book in December 1922, Eliot distanced himself from its vision of despair. On November 15, 1922, he wrote to Richard Aldington, saying, "As for *The Waste Land*, that is a thing of the past so far as I am concerned and I am now feeling toward a new form and style." The poem is known for its obscure nature—its slippage between satire and prophecy; its abrupt changes of speaker, location, and time. Despite this, it has become a touchstone of modern literature, a poetic counterpart to a novel published in the same year, James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Among its best-known phrases are "April is the cruellest month", "I will show you fear in a handful of dust"; and "Shantih shantih shantih," the Sanskrit mantra that ends the poem.

The Hollow Men

The Hollow Men appeared in 1925. For the critic Edmund Wilson, it marked "the nadir of the phase of despair and desolation given such effective expression in *The Waste Land*." It is Eliot's major poem of the late twenties. Similar to other work, its themes are overlapping and fragmentary: post-war Europe under the Treaty of Versailles (which Eliot despised); the difficulty of hope and religious conversion; and Eliot's failed marriage.

Allen Tate perceived a shift in Eliot's method, writing that, "The mythologies disappear altogether in *The Hollow Men*." This is a striking claim for a poem as indebted to Dante as anything else in Eliot's early work, to say little of the modern English mythology—the "Old Guy Fawkes" of the Gunpowder Plot—or the colonial and agrarian mythos of Joseph Conrad and James George Frazer, which, at least for reasons of textual history, echo in *The Waste Land*. The "continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" that is so characteristic of his mythical method remained in fine form. *The Hollow Men* contains some of Eliot's most famous lines, notably its conclusion:

This is the way the world ends

This is the way the world ends

This is the way the world ends

Not with a bang but a whimper.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the first long poem written by Eliot after his 1927 conversion to Anglicanism. Published in 1930, it deals with the struggle that ensues when one who has lacked faith acquires it. Sometimes referred to as Eliot's "conversion poem," it is richly but ambiguously allusive, and deals with the aspiration to move from spiritual barrenness to hope for human salvation. The style is different from the poetry that predates his conversion. *Ash Wednesday* and the poems that followed had a more casual, melodic, and contemplative method.

Many critics were particularly enthusiastic about it. Edwin Muir maintained that it is one of the most moving poems Eliot wrote, and perhaps the "most perfect," though it was not well-received by everyone. The poem's groundwork of orthodox Christianity discomfited many of the more secular literati.

Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats

In 1930, Eliot published a book of light verse, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* ("Old Possum" was Ezra Pound's nickname for him). This first edition had an illustration of the author on the cover. In 1954, the composer Alan Rawsthorne set six of the poems for speaker and orchestra, in a work entitled *Practical Cats*. After Eliot's death, the book was adapted as the basis of the musical, *Cats*, by Andrew Lloyd Webber, first produced in London's West End in 1981 and opening on Broadway the following year.

Four Quartets

Eliot regarded *Four Quartets* as his masterpiece, and it is the work that led to his being awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. It consists of four long poems, each first published separately: *Burnt Norton* (1936), *East*

Coker (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941) and *Little Gidding* (1942). Each has five sections. Although they resist easy characterization, each begins with a rumination on the geographical location of its title, and each meditates on the nature of time in some important respect—theological, historical, physical—and its relation to the human condition. Each poem is associated with one of the four classical elements: air, earth, water, and fire.

Burnt Norton asks what it means to consider things that might have been. We see the shell of an abandoned house, and Eliot toys with the idea that all these merely possible realities are present together, invisible to us. All the possible ways people might walk across a courtyard add up to a vast dance we can't see; children who aren't there are hiding in the bushes.

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden.

East Coker continues the examination of time and meaning, focusing in a famous passage on the nature of language and poetry. Out of darkness, Eliot offers a solution: "I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope".

The Dry Salvages treats the element of water, via images of river and sea. It strives to contain opposites: "... the past and future/Are conquered, and reconciled".

Little Gidding (the element of fire) is the most anthologized of the Quartets. Eliot's experiences as an air raid warden in The Blitz power the poem, and he imagines meeting Dante during the German bombing. The beginning of the Quartets ("Houses .../Are removed, destroyed") had become a violent everyday experience; this creates an animation, where for the first time he talks of Love as the driving force behind all experience. From this background, the Quartets end with an affirmation of Julian of Norwich: "all shall be well and/All manner of thing shall be well".

The Four Quartets cannot be understood without reference to Christian thought, traditions, and history. Eliot draws upon the theology, art, symbolism and language of such figures as Dante, and mystics St. John of the Cross and Julian of Norwich. The "deeper communion" sought in East Coker, the "hints and whispers of children, the sickness that must grow worse in order to find healing," and the exploration which inevitably leads us home all point to the pilgrim's path along the road of sanctification.

THE WASTE LAND

The Waste Land is a 434-line Modernist poem by T. S. Eliot published in 1922. It has been called "one of the most important poems of the 20th

century." Despite the poem's obscurity—its shifts between satire and prophecy, its abrupt and unannounced changes of speaker, location and time, its elegiac but intimidating summoning up of a vast and dissonant range of cultures and literatures—the poem has become a familiar touchstone of modern literature. Among its famous phrases are "April is the cruellest month" (its first line); "I will show you fear in a handful of dust"; and (its last line) the mantra in the Sanskrit language "Shantih shantih shantih."

Style

The style of the work in part grows out of Eliot's interest in exploring the possibilities of dramatic monologue. This interest dates back at least as far as *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Of course, "The Waste Land" is not a single monologue like "Prufrock." Instead, it is made up of a wild variety of voices (sometimes in monologue, dialogue, or with more than two characters speaking).

The style of the poem overall is marked by the hundreds of allusions and quotations from other texts (classic and obscure; "high-brow" and "low-brow") that Eliot peppered throughout the poem. In addition to the many "highbrow" references and/or quotes from poets like Baudelaire, Shakespeare, Ovid, and Homer, Eliot also included a couple of references to "low-brow" genres. A good example of this is Eliot's quote from the Tin Pan Alley song "The Shakespearian Rag" by Ziegfeld Follies composers Dave Stamper and Gene Buck. There were also a number of low-brow references in the opening section of Eliot's original manuscript (when the poem was entitled "He Do The Policeman in Different Voices"), but they were removed from the final draft after Eliot cut this original opening section.

"The Waste Land" is notable for its seemingly disjointed structure, indicative of the Modernist style of Joyce's *Ulysses* (which Eliot cited as an influence and which he read the same year that he was writing "The Waste Land"). In the Modernist style, Eliot jumps from one voice or image to another without clearly delineating these shifts for the reader. He also includes phrases from multiple foreign languages (both Cyrillic and latinnate), indicative of Pound's influence.

Structure

The poem is preceded by a Latin and Greek epigraph from *The Satyricon* of Petronius. In English, it reads: "I saw with my own eyes the Sibyl of Cumae hanging in a jar, and when the boys said to her, Sibyl, what do you want? she replied I want to die."

Following the epigraph is a dedication (added in a 1925 republication) that reads "For Ezra Pound: il miglior fabbro" Here Eliot is both quoting line 117 of Canto XXVI of Dante's *Purgatorio*, the second cantica of *The*

Divine Comedy, where Dante defines the troubadour Arnaut Daniel as "the best smith of the mother tongue" and also Pound's title of chapter 2 of his *The Spirit of Romance* (1910) where he translated the phrase as "the better craftsman." This dedication was originally written in ink by Eliot in the 1922 Boni & Live right paperback edition of the poem presented to Pound; it was subsequently included in future editions.

The five parts of *The Waste Land* are entitled :

1. The Burial of the Dead
2. A Game of Chess
3. The Fire Sermon
4. Death by Water
5. What the Thunder Said.

The text of the poem is followed by several pages of notes, purporting to explain his metaphors, references, and allusions. Some of these notes are helpful in interpreting the poem, but some are arguably even more puzzling, and many of the most opaque passages are left unannotated. The notes were added after Eliot's publisher requested something longer to justify printing *The Waste Land* in a separate book.

There is some question as to whether Eliot originally intended *The Waste Land* to be a collection of individual poems (additional poems were supplied to Pound for his comments on including them) or to be considered one poem with five sections.

The structure of the poem is also meant to loosely follow the vegetation myth and Holy Grail folklore surrounding the Fisher King story as outlined by Jessie Weston in her book *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). Weston's book was so central to the structure of the poem that it was the first text that Eliot cited in his "Notes on the Waste Land."

Summary

Eliot opens the poem with a perfect motto, which adequately captures the prevailing mood of loss and depravity in the modern world. The epigraph presents an image of literally suspended life and Cleanth Brooks rightly argues that it signifies a "death — in — life", from which death proper would be an escape. Incidentally, it ought to be noted that Eliot draws contradistinctions and comparisons between living death and death proper.

The protagonist of the poem is Tiresias with wrinkled female ducks. He is aged but paradoxically is of all ages. His bisexuality endows him with a greater vision and understanding of all matters of life and death and the hereafter of all men and women, individually and collectively. He is the single vice and the many vices that one hears in the poem. He is the active

speaker and hearer, and also the passive listener and ironic observer — though a blind prophet — of the wasted and wasting conditions of the waste land. In fact, it is he who sees the substance of the poem as Eliot himself asserts in his notes that trailed this monumental composition. In turn, all the characters in the poem, including the Fisher King and the poet merge and melt in one. He is literally the cosmos for he contains the multitudes. And he is eminently fitted to be the visionary surveying the desolating conditions of the wasteland.

Tiresias, the omniscient protagonist, is blind and his blindness is symbolic of the inability of the Waste Landers to see the wasteness. The Waste Landers are morally depraved and spiritually dead and they are not prepared for any striving. Therefore, they resent Spring, which is a painful disturbance to their unloving state. Unlike Chaucer, they consider April as "the cruellest month breeding Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/memory and desire, stirring/dull roots with spring rain". In their unloving dead state, the painful intuitive life that keeps them warm and helps them maintain a little life. Conversely, they prefer winter for it is in consonance with their dead state.

Derek Traversi argues: "covered in forgetful snow" maintaining "a little life" in the form of desiccated roots — "dried season has preserved a faint underground stirring, a suggestion of vitality, which may or may not be the prelude to revival. It may be that this is only of life which the dwellers in the waste land desire, or can contemplate."

The prevailing sense of uneasiness is notably extended and is sustained throughout the first section entitled "THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD". The title aptly signifies that the Waste Landers prefer their unliving state — buried lives — to death proper, which ensures a higher rise to god and better living in the hereafter. Sun and rain and spring are the agents of new life and they are painful disturbances to the Waste Landers who have buried themselves deep in their secular and material lives. And April with religious connotation of being the season fit for undertaking holy pilgrimages is lost sight of by the Waste Landers who are materialistically preoccupied.

Marie is the typical globetrotter of the wasteland leading a directionless, pointless and soulless life. She is homeless and rootless as the Waste Landers are. In consonance with her life of no significance her speech drifts from point to point becoming touchingly inconsequential. Her conversation — presented in scraps — with her cousin, the Archduke, and her childhood reminiscence remembered against a spring background of alternation sun and rain are recalled by Tiresias, the omniscient protagonist. Marie's childhood of innocence and purity and involving a certain amount of "risk" painfully contrasts with her adulthood and by

extension with the desolate and desolating conditions of the wasteland. The life of the Waste Landers is one of retreating into a safe meaningless routine, as though such a life is going to help them shun death proper. The poem reads: "In the mountains, there you feel free I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter." Derek Traversi says that Marie's reminiscences "are reflections of an ambivalent state." The empty sophistication of cosmopolitan idlers is suggested by the reference to going South in the winter. The rootless cosmopolitan tourists are not part of the rhythm of the life cycle.

The poem shifts — shifting references constitute a characteristic feather of the poem — from the personal reminiscence of Marie, as remembered by the protagonist to the severe and denunciatory words of the Old Testament prophets, particularly Ezekiel, set in a bleak and somber tone. With the dead tree providing no shelter, with the cricket promising no relief, with the dry stone without sound of water, "son of man"- mankind — suffers as the persecuted Israelites did in their days of exodus to the Promised Land. The "son of man" in the WASTELAND experiences in mind a heap of broken images because of his having moved away from the sea of faith.

The words of the Old Testament prophets recall the doom of the Israelites and hint a similar fate to the Waste Landers if they do not give up their "broken images. The words of the prophets also hold out the hope that the Waste Landers can look forward to their spiritual rejuvenation if they move to the shelter of the red rock. This conceptual though it is argued through the roots clutching and sprouting and branching — like the branching arms of the Mother Church instituted by the Messiah — in the spring and rain and growing green. The picture is reminiscent of Christ, who used the phrase, "Son of Man" to identify himself with successive generations of mankind with the roots beginning to clutch and grow into branches holds out the hope to the 'Waste Landers that they can gain the vital impulse to lead a spiritual life even in the adverse conditions and unfavorable environment of "stony rubbish" in the wasteland. Derek Traversi analyses the lines adequately: "The prevailing impression is still one of monotony, death, desolation, absence of the life-giving water; and yet there is an indication, tenuous even ambiguous, indeed, of change. The "voice" afflicted by its sense of perceiving nothing real beyond the heap of broken images, fragmentary impressions, indicates for red rock in the desert. And the only grim alternative to the unloving dead Waste Landers is to fear death in a handful of dust. They should not delude themselves feeling that if they are materially safe they can shun death. And Derek Traversi states: "In the fear of death, which seems to be the most powerful

emotion open to those who dwell in the wasteland there may be the beginning of more positive awareness of what it means to be human, alive."

Love is no more a pure passion working its way up intuitively. It is dragged in the mire in the wasteland. It is reduced to mere animalism and beastly sexuality. In the name of love, deceptions and violations are perpetuated. Pure love, which expects no returns, which is altogether governed by the sense of "otherness", is not practiced in the wasteland.

The Hyacinth girl episode, which is preceded and followed by libretto from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, highlights primarily the rejuvenation motif. It also points out that love can be intense as well as deceptive. The deceiving quality and the intense nature of love are signified by the silence of the lover. The first fragment from Wagner's opera is hopeful and forward looking in tone. The second fragment is in consonance with the wasteland condition, and leaves one with the impression of love resulting in desolation and emptiness. Both fragments from Wagner's opera prove that love in its highest moments of meaning and intensity, resembles death. The poet drives home the truth that Waste Land love cannot escape from getting reduced to nothingness. And it is only lust that prevails and lust as divorced from any redeeming qualities of love. Madame Sosostris', reference to the tarot pack, like the Hyacinth girl episode, underscores the rejuvenation motif. The hanged god Frazer is associated with the sacrificial deities of the fertility rites to highlight the rejuvenation motif. And the hanged man by shifting its reference stands strikingly for the fulfillment that can be richly experienced in Christ. Eugenides, the Symrna merchant, symbolizes the one eyed, with his one eye on material gains only. His other eye is blind symbolizing that he is blind to the lasting gains that can be gained through spirituality.

Madame Sosostris, the false prophetess, is paradoxically true in assessing the real mental point stating "fear death by water". She only feels about death proper. The Waste Lander's endeavors are to avoid and shun death for he feels that death proper is an end and is a cruel depriver of life. With this end in view he seeks to shun death by making himself materially strong. He simply fails to realize that death "imaginatively" transforms and leads one to better state in the hereafter. The words of Sosostris "fear death by water" when contrasted with the words from "*The Tempest*", "those are pearls that were his eyes Look!" highlight the double concept of death as tragically meaningless and conceivably redeeming. Madame Sosostris is sinister and comical and is the contemporary exponent of a false religion. She symbolizes the falsehood that is rampant in the wasteland.

In the unreal city of the wasteland, which is synonymous with hell, the modern materialists lead godless and valueless lives. The spirits of Dante's limbo were dead. But they were spiritually alive. In the modern inferno of

the wasteland the hollow men are physically alive but spiritually dead. The reference to Baudelaire in the content, underscores the fact that the wasteland is filled to its capacity with spiritually dead unloving non men. The protagonist undertakes an emotional journey through the unreal city and he witnesses contemporary scene of desolation, emptiness, pains and tears and despair. This state of cultural waste and spiritual aridity is correlated with the catastrophic havoc caused by the Punic Wars at Mylae or the First World War, for the experience and consequence of war remain the same. The protagonist meets crowds of non — men — so many living dead moving like specters in their routine hats exhaling sighs short and frequent, and fixing their eyes before their feet. Their fixation concerns only themselves and none other. They never take into cognizance Christ's concern for others and the basic concept of Christianity to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

The protagonist on meeting Stetson asks him to keep the dog away from the corpse" of Frazer's corn god buried as a part of the vegetation rites. The "corpse" is not to be dug out by man or beast for; the Waste Landers are not for any spiritual revival. If the "corpse" signifies material progress then, they do not want the dog to disturb before the seeds embedded in the "corpse" sprout, thereby ensuring material prosperity. The quotation from Baudelaire proves all the Waste Landers to be hypocrites. And "sprout" has the sexual connotation of oversized sexlessness.

The poem courses from abstractions to concretions. And it moves from the general aspects to particular conditions. The motto for this second section of the poem is derived from Middleton's play *Women Beware Women*. And the motto "The game of chess" highlights the fact that loves in the Waste Landers no more intuitive, pure and innocent. But love in the wasteland waters down to the practising of dehumanized sex or indulging in sex violations and deceptions and sex prudery. Furthermore, the motto symbolizes the life of the Waste Landers, which is empty, abstract, traditional, and full of competitive intrigue.

The sophistication of a rich woman with her hair spreading out in fierce symbolizes the oversexed sexlessness in the wasteland. Her chair is like aburnished throne reminding one of Enobarbus' description of the grandeur and opulence of Antony's Cleopatra. The golden Cupidon, the fruited vine and the carved dolphin are magnified with the synthetic perfumes that permeate the air. These are mere withered stumps of time spelling out no significance to the sophisticated rich women. Beneath the surface or rich sensual variety there lie artificiality and sterile pointlessness.

The waste Landers live in a rat's alley where the dead lose their bones. This pointedly drives home the truth that the Waste Landers are obsessed with the thought of death as a cruel depriver of life and that physical death

as a reliever of hallucinatory pains and anxieties, with which they suffer, and that death leads one to a better state in the hereafter. They fail to read the significance in Ferdinand's words which implies, though imaginatively, the transformation that death works. In fact, the Waste Landers hear nothing, see nothing, and remember nothing. And they have reached by their unloving nature, a stage of pointless, and empty and unreal existence. And in their living of no significance, they pass through a despairing routine with hot water at ten and, if it rains, a closed car at four.

If the sophisticated rich woman is constitutionally unable to experience the pure passion of love, so is the proletariat specimen Lil. The conversation of the working class women in the London Pub is focused on their desire to have sex without procreation. The interest that the demobilized Albert has for Lil depends on her outward beauty and not on her inward worth. The sophisticated rich and the proletariat poor commonly experience love in all its vacuity and as such it tends to point out the general malaise that afflicts the Waste Landers. It is reflection on the all round putrescence. There is the hurrying into sex, on the one hand and on the other the involvement of everyone is sexual perversion. Love and sex, therefore, have lost their proper function: they are no more the true sources of life and vitality in the wasteland.

Cleanth Brooks, one of the perceptive critics of modern times, reads the significance of "the change off Philomel" passage which is repeatedly introduced, with the ape neck Sweeney, representing all that is vulgar, likened to the barbarous King Tereus: "Needless to say, lust defeats its own ends."

The portrayal of the change of Philomel by the barbarous king is a fitting commentary on the scene, which it ornaments. The wasteland of the legend came in this way; the modern waste land has also come in this way." It is high time — HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME — the Waste Landers took efforts to gain spiritual rejuvenation. Ophelia's good nights hint at something that borders on insanity, which is wasteland condition. To the Waste Landers, who suffer from spiritual inadequacies, the Fire Sermon of the Buddha is out of context, though the Buddha's preaching's are in consonance with the image of Christ's Sermon on the Mount in significance and intensity. The Buddha's sermon advocates that lust and baser passions be burned in fire. But Tiresias' survey of the wasteland leaves him with the image of men being consumed by the fire of lust. It is the of flesh and the Waste Landers experience its corrupting influences. The Thames of the golden age of Queen Elizabeth glorified by Spenser in Prothalamion, running sweetly in pure state of love is replaced by the Thames of the Waste Land that bears testimony to the summer nights and picnics gone through by the contemporaneous with a kind of hopeless disdain. The

rubbish left behind by the picnickers' reveal the pointless measures resorted to by the Waste Landers. In fact, they achieve nothing, and nothing is there to sustain them. Constantly is heard in the background, the significant words of Marvell, "Times winged chariot hurrying near". The line of Marvell when studied in conjunction, with the rattle of the bones and the wind under the door makes a pointed reference to the Waste Landers' obsession with the thought of death as an end. And therefore, in their effort to shun death they do not realize that it is a futile exercise. Furthermore, this thought of death proper is an argument put forth by the Waste Landers to make the most of life.

The three Thames daughters typing the good time girls of the wasteland. They in a way resemble the ideal nymphs of the Greek mythology. They are in fact, the damaged priestesses of the permissive society. The loitering heirs for occasional pick up these girls. The damaged priestesses learn to be conscious of the emptiness that prevails in the wasteland. They learn to connect nothing with anything and their parents expect nothing. Thus, everything is reduced to a state of nullity in the wasteland.

The dehumanization that was corroding, crept into the sex act, and it is strikingly in the parody of sex indulged in, by the young man Carbuncular with the typist. She mechanically reacts to sex and displays no emotion. She allows his exploring hands on her encountering no defense. It is because her vanity leaves her frigidly indifferent. After the dehumanized sex act is over, he gropes his way out and it is typical of the groping of the Waste Landers. The typist is happy that the mechanical sex act is over. And this dehumanized sex takes to the heart of unreality that makes everything in the wasteland. Sex prudery and sex exhibition mark modern society. These are revealed by the callous way she brushed her hair after the act is over and how she litters her 'divan' with stockings, slippers, camisoles and 'stays'.

The sound of horns does not bring Diana to Actaeon but takes the ape neck Sweeney — he symbolizes all that is vulgar and ugly in the Wasteland — to Mrs. Porter's daughter, who washes her feet in soda water to keep herself fair and attractive. She is conscious of her physical beauty and not her inward worth. Eugenides, that one eyed merchant, invites the protagonist for a homosexual bout at the Metropole. This is again symptomatic of the sexual perversion that is a pervading wasteland condition. The third climactic section concludes with the words of St. Augustine "O, Lord Thou pluckest" point to the redeeming idea of prayer that is open to Waste Landers. The motto "Death by Water", which Madame Sosostris wants the Waste Landers to be wary of and fear, indicates the obsession of the Waste Landers, who are obsessed with the

thought of death as an end and therefore endeavour ever to shun it. But water like fire is symbolic of purification. Real significance is to read in the death by water Phlebas, the Phoenician sailor which makes the pat life of the dead person gain, adding significance and life in the hereafter a greater meaning. As such death is more intense than the miraculous birth and this is what the Christian sacrament of Baptism testifies. The bones of Phoebe are picked up in whispers by the sea and the bones are purified and made free of the contamination of flesh. In fine, water is a purifier as fire is. Derek Traversi argues: "The contemplation of death by water points, in its own way, to the same possible indicated in transformation of the Fire of lust into the purgatorial Fire of lust, into the purgatorial flame of Christian and Buddhist tradition."

The fifth section is capped by a fitting motto signifying the worth of the three tests as laid down by Prajapathi for his sons. If the Waste Landers adhere to three religious principles then they can redeem themselves from their desolate and desolating condition. All they have to do is to control themselves, to be compassionate and to be charitable to others in thought, word and deed.

The mental and emotional journey of Tiresias synchronizes with the journey of the Grail quester, who encounters hardships, with the greatest hardship of finding a rock and a 'pool' beside it with no water, but only the sound of water as heard in the "drip drop drip drop drop dorp dorp" of the

cry of the hermit - thrush. All these tend to prove that the Waste Landers still suffer from mirages and hallucinatory tensions.

Tiresias reminisces over the incidents surrounding the passion of Christ. And the Messiah is the Arch victim of suffering and this victimization persists in the Waste Landers through the Philomels. "He who was living is now dead/we who were living are dying/with little patience." It is for the Waste Landers to face the death proper without histrionics and self-regarding excitement. It is everyman's fate to court death as the deliverer who conducts one into the hereafter, where a great rise and one into the hereafter, where a great rise and a chance of gaining oneness with God are possible.

The Waste Landers is poised between reality and hallucination. His is the state somewhere between that of the Apostles and the Antarctic explorers. Derek Traversi analyses the point adequately "The experience of the Apostles was, in terms of the Gospel narrative, a reality, a proof of resurrection; that of the explorers is, quite simply, an illusion. Those who live in the desert, the wasteland, is somewhere between the two." The reference to the barbarian hordes swarming over endless plains indicates the post-War chaos in Europe. The modern world is crumbling with the

"palling towards" of "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria Nienna London." All the cities of the wasteland are in danger of disintegration. And the thought of the city as a place of safety and security, where men can live with others in a reasonable and spiritual way, is becoming a mirage, a mere illusion. The journey of Tiresias and the Quester ends in emptiness with "decayed hole" facing them, it is so to say that the Waste Lander, as the first step towards his redemption, must take cognizance of the absence of all belief and content that has swayed him thus far. The cry of the cock, which has the power to drive away the forces of evil, is the signal for the Thunder — God — to speak and for the rain to fall and rejuvenate the Waste Landers' spiritually. The triple commands of the Thunder — God — to one are to give, to sympathize and to control. They are not like the empty words of a madman. They spell out the righteous paths to be followed to attain salvation; and whoever follows them will gain peace that passeth understating. Thus Eliot's "The Waste Land" helps the reader to become conscious of the spiritual aridity and perceive the total loss and depravity of modern life. The poem holds out the hope that the Waste Lander can regain spirituality and vitality of life by seeking the shelter of the red rock — the religion of God.

Glossary

1. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD : "The order for the Dead" is the complete title of the burial service in the Church of England, as derived from The Book of Common Prayer. In a related context, the burial of the dead is also intended to convey the burial of the fertility gods as explained by Miss Jessie Weston and Sir James Frazer. These myths are related to vegetation cults and harvest festivals, and the cycle of fertility and decay, spring and winter, in nature. In Egypt, the cycles of fertility and decay were personified as gods, such as Osiris etc. who were buried or drowned in the sea and again, re-claimed in spring. The concept of "The Burial of the Dead" is also deriving for the Grail legends, particularly the event of the buried corpse. The question is asked whether the buried corpse begun to sprout, whether there is any hope that the vegetation God may arise and fertility to the wasteland.

Line 1 April is the cruelest months:

April, the harbinger of spring, is also connected with the great event of Christ's resurrection, Easter.

Line 2 Lilacs out of the dead land:

Lilac flowers are symbols of spring, renewal in nature and fertility. Eliot reverses the implication of this.

Line 66 King William Street :

A street in London where Eliot walked daily to reach his office.

Line 67 Saint Mary Woolnoth :

A famous Anglican Church with beautiful interior decorations designed by Sir Christopher Wren. It is located on the corner of King William Street and Lombard street in London. The clock referred to helped Eliot and many other office-goers (at 9 a.m) in their office schedules office- goers (at 9 a.m) in their office schedules.

Line 69 Stetson :

An obvious reference to Ezra Pound who was nicknamed "Buffalo Bill". Pound was known for his very impressive hat.

Line 70 Mylae :

If refers to the Battle of Mylae (260 B.C) which was part of the Punic War fought on the issue of trade between the Romans and the Carthaginians.

2. A GAME OF CHESS:

The title is taken from a play 'A GAME OF CHESS' (1624) by Thomas Middleton (1580-1627), which is a satire on an uneasy marriage forced by political necessity. In another play of Middleton, 'WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN' (1621) is shown, an actual game of Livia. She is the Duke's accomplice and plays with the mother. Meanwhile, the Duke is seducing Bianca, which is another kind of game. The woman at the dressing table reminds one of Belinda in Alexander Pope's THE RAPE OF THE LOCK (1714) and the resemblance is not superficial, but has deeper implications. The ornate quality of Belinda's dressing table and the society lady's drawing room is quite impressive.

Line 77 The chair she sat, in like a burnished throne:

This is based on Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra as the beautiful queen is sailing in d decorated barge on the river Cygnus in Asia Minor. She meets Antony (Act III, SC ii). Eliot's language is full or ironic distortions of Enobarbus' speech.

Line 80 Cupidon:

The golden image of Cupid, the god of love.

Line 82 Candelebra: Line 93 Coffered:

large, branched candlestick.

Line 93 Coffered :

adorned with sunken, low, panels.

Line 98 Sylvan scene:

Eliot has referred the reader to Milton's Paradise Lost. Book IV, 140: describing Satan's response to his first sight of the Garden of, Eden.

Line 115 rat's alley:

a meaningful image of spiritual darkness and modern man's sense of loss.

Line 128 The Shakespearian Rag:

A very popular jazz song in the years of the First World War (1914-18). It was an American hit song of 1912, it was partly an adoption of Kenneth Ball's song, "O you Beautiful Doll".

Line 139 demobbed :

discharge from the army. It is a slang expression, an abbreviation for demobilized.

Line 166 gammon :

ham or bacon.

THE FIRE SERMON:

The subtitle is based on Lord Buddha's great sermon to his disciples against the fires of anger. Lust and malice, the six temptations, that consume men. It also evokes the sentiments of St. Augustine about unholy passions as well as the injunction of St. Paul against unholy alliance.

Line 173 the river's tent is broken:

The visual image is projected of the shelter provided by leafy branches of trees overhanging the river. However, the loss is deeper because tent also means a tabernacle over a holy place in the Old Testament. The river is associated with the tent as an image of power and security (See: Isaiah 33:1-20).

Line 189 while I was fishing in the dull canal:

The Fisher King of mythology. To fish is to seek eternity and salvation.

Line 206 Tereu:

Tereu is the Latin vocative from Tereus, the king who raped Philomela, see also John Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe* (1956) in which the words jug, jug, jug, jug, occur.

Line 209 Smyrna:

Modern Izmir, in the western part of Turkey a great centre of trade.

Line 212 demotic:

Vulgar, abominable.

Line 214 Metropole:

A fashionable luxury hotel Brighton, a seaside resort on the South Coast, sixty miles from London. The proposal made by Eugenides to protagonist for a "week—end at Brighton" has homosexual implications.

Line 234 As silk hat on a Bradford millionaire:

Bradford is a great centre of wool manufacture in Yorkshire and an abode of many millionaires in that trade. Rapid fortunes were made here in World War I.

Line 264 Magnus martyr:

The beautiful church designed by Sir Christopher Wren which is built in Lower Thames Street.

Line 276 Isle of Dogs:

The river bank opposite Greenwich.

Line 281 stern:

Hind part of ship.

Line 300 Margate sands:

A seaside resort in Kent on the Thames estuary. Eliot began composing 'The Waste Land' here in 1921 while he was recovering from an acute illness.

DEATH BY WATER:

It is a reference to the practice at Alexandria narrated by Jessie Weston of throwing into the sea an effigy of a pagan fertility god such as Adonis as a symbol of the death of 'nature's power'. The head was retrieved and worshipped as a symbol of the resurrected God. The Christian sacrament of Baptism could also be cited as another significant tradition in this context. This section is a close adaptation of the last seven lines of French poem written by Eliot *Dans le Restaurant* (1916-17).

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight drowned, forgot the cry of gulls and the swell of the connish seas, and the profit and the loss and the cargo of tin. An undersea current carried him far, took him back through the ages of his past. It is terrible for a man once so handsome and tall.

Line 320 O you turn the wheel:

The wheel of fortune as engraved on the Tarot pack of cards which is turned by a figure holding a sword and a crown, perhaps the mysterious nature of man's fate is suggested In this picture. It suggests, in the Hindu scripture the "terrible wheel of rebirth and death."

WHAT THE THUNDER SAID:

Eliot writes that the source of this subtitle is the Indian legend of the thunder derived from the sacred book the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Eliot also says that in the first part (lines 322-94) three themes are explored. First, the story told in the Bible (St.Luke 24: 13-31) of the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus, a village near Jerusalem) on the day of Christ's resurrection. He joins them, but they don't know him until

the evening meal when he blesses them. The disciples, meanwhile speak about the arrest, trial and the crucifixion of the Lord. Eliot's second theme is the final state of the Grail quest and the journey to Chapel Perilous of the knight. This theme is interwoven with the theme of the Emmaus journey. Eliot's third theme is modern — the decay of Eastern Europe in the twentieth century.

Lines 322-328:

These lines evoke the course of great events from the betrayal and arrest of Jesus Christ, the agony and prayer in garden of Gethsemane to the moment of crucifixion. Also they are indirectly evocative of the death of the Fisher King. John reports (18:3) the arrest of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane: "Judas then received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Lines 326-328 reverberation:

At the death of Christ the whole earth shook. See Mathew 27:51, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

Line 339 Carious:

decayed

Line 353 Cicada:

an insect

Line 395 Ganga:

The original sacred Sanskrit word for River Ganges. Ganga is the great river of India, which rises in the Himalayas, 14,000ft, above sea level. It is first called the Bhagirathi, taking the name of Ganges after the Alakanada joins it. It flows southeastwards to Allahabad, where it receives the Jumuna, then turns east past Varanasi and Patna. South of its confluence with Brahamapurta the vast delta begins. It enters the sea by several mounts, one being the Hooghly, on which Calcutta stands. The Ganges is 1,560 sq.m. It is subject to floods, which cover an immense area. To the Hindus the Ganges is a scared river, and they come in thousands to bathe in her waters.

Line 397 Himavant:

The original Sanskrit name for the high mountain in the Himalayan ranges.

Line 400 DA :

This is the voice of Thunder. The parable embodying the divine message of thunder is found in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad V, i.

Line 411 Dayadhavam :

sympathize

Line 416 broken Coriolanus :

The hero of Shakespeare's play, Coriolanus. He was broken because pride and selfishness brought about his death, to the shouting of the mob. He scorned the mob, yet he was broken by his won pride.

Line 418 Damayata :

Be controlled.

Line 433 Shanthi :

Sanskrit word, Eliot tells us that it refers to the Supreme Peace — "Peace that passeth understanding". Shanthi is the word, which serves as the formal ending to the Upanishads. In this context one may recall the words of Paul to the early Christians: "And the Peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". (Philippians 4:5) Tiresias is a seer who warns the crumbling world that it can be saved and regenerated only by going back to the Supreme Wisdom contained in the message of the Thunder: Give, Sympathize, and Control.

Analysis of the poem Waste Land

The Waste Land Section I: "The Burial of the Dead"

Summary

The first section of The Waste Land takes its title from a line in the Anglican burial service. It is made up of four vignettes, each seemingly from the perspective of a different speaker. The first is an autobiographical snippet from the childhood of an aristocratic woman, in which she recalls sledding and claims that she is German, not Russian (this would be important if the woman is meant to be a member of the recently defeated Austrian imperial family). The woman mixes a meditation on the seasons with remarks on the barren state of her current existence ("I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter"). The second section is a prophetic, apocalyptic invitation to journey into a desert waste, where the speaker will show the reader "something different from either/Your shadow at morning striding behind you/Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;/[He] will show you fear in a handful of dust" (Evelyn Waugh took the title for one of his best-known novels from these lines). The almost threatening prophetic tone is mixed with childhood reminiscences about a "hyacinth girl" and a nihilistic epiphany the speaker has after an encounter with her. These recollections are filtered through quotations from Wagner's operatic version of Tristan und Isolde, an Arthurian tale of adultery and loss. The third

episode in this section describes an imaginative tarot reading, in which some of the cards Eliot includes in the reading are not part of an actual tarot deck. The final episode of the section is the most surreal. The speaker walks through a London populated by ghosts of the dead. He confronts a figure with whom he once fought in a battle that seems to conflate the clashes of World War I with the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage (both futile and excessively 'destructive wars'). The speaker asks the ghostly figure, Stetson, about the fate of a corpse planted in his garden. The episode concludes with a famous line from the preface to Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* (an important collection of Symbolist poetry), accusing the reader of sharing in the poet's sins.

Form

Like "Prufrock," this section of *The Waste Land* can be seen as a modified dramatic monologue. The four speakers in this section are frantic in their need to speak, to find an audience, but they find themselves surrounded by dead people and thwarted by outside circumstances, like wars. Because the sections are so short and the situations so confusing, the effect is not one of an overwhelming impression of a single character; instead, the reader is left with the feeling of being trapped in a crowd, unable to find a familiar face.

Also like "Prufrock," *The Waste Land* employs only partial rhyme schemes and short bursts of structure. These are meant to reference—but also rework—the literary past, achieving simultaneously a stabilizing and a defamiliarizing effect. The world of *The Waste Land* has some parallels to an earlier time, but it cannot be approached in the same way. The inclusion of fragments in languages other than English further complicates matters. The reader is not expected to be able to translate these immediately; rather, they are reminders of the cosmopolitan nature of twentieth-century Europe and of mankind's fate after the Tower of Babel: We will never be able to perfectly comprehend one another.

Commentary

Not only is *The Waste Land* Eliot's greatest work, but it may be—along with Joyce's *Ulysses*—the greatest work of all modernist literature. Most of the poem was written in 1921, and it first appeared in print in 1922. As the poem's dedication indicates, Eliot received a great deal of guidance from Ezra Pound, who encouraged him to cut large sections of the planned work and to break up the rhyme scheme. Recent scholarship suggests that Eliot's wife, Vivien, also had a significant role in the poem's final form. A long work divided into five sections, *The Waste Land* takes on the degraded mess that Eliot considered modern culture to constitute, particularly after the first World War had ravaged Europe. A sign of the pessimism with

which Eliot approaches his subject is the poem's epigraph, taken from the *Satyricon*, in which the Sibyl (a woman with prophetic powers who ages but never dies) looks at the future and proclaims that she only wants to die. The Sibyl's predicament mirrors what Eliot sees as his own: He lives in a culture that has decayed and withered but will not expire, and he is forced to live with reminders of its former glory. Thus, the underlying plot of *The Waste Land*, inasmuch as it can be said to have one, revolves around Eliot's reading of two extraordinarily influential contemporary cultural/anthropological texts; Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. Both of these works focus on the persistence of ancient fertility rituals in modern thought and religion; of particular interest to both authors is the story of the Fisher King, who has been wounded in the genitals and whose lack of potency is the cause of his country becoming a desiccated "waste land." Heal the Fisher King, the legend says, and the land will regain its fertility. According to Weston and Frazer, healing the Fisher King has been the subject of mythic tales from ancient Egypt to Arthurian England. Eliot picks up on the figure of the Fisher King legend's wasteland as an appropriate description of the state of modern society. The important difference, of course, is that in Eliot's world there is no way to heal the Fisher King; perhaps there is no Fisher King at all. The legend's imperfect integration into a modern meditation highlights the lack of a unifying narrative (like religion or mythology) in the modern world.

Eliot's poem, like the anthropological texts that inspired it, draws on a vast range of sources. Eliot provided copious footnotes with the publication of *The Waste Land* in book form; these are an excellent source for tracking down the origins of a reference. Many of the references are from the Bible: at the time of the poem's writing Eliot was just beginning to develop an interest in Christianity that would reach its apex in the *Four Quartets*. The overall range of allusions in *The Waste Land*, though, suggests no overarching paradigm but rather a grab bag of broken fragments that must somehow be pieced together to form a coherent whole. While Eliot employs a deliberately difficult style and seems often to find the most obscure reference possible, he means to do more than just frustrate his reader and display his own intelligence: He intends to provide a mimetic account of life in the confusing world of the twentieth century.

The Waste Land opens with a reference to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In this case, though, April is not the happy month of pilgrimages and storytelling. It is instead the time when the land should be regenerating after a long winter. Regeneration, though, is painful, for it brings back reminders of a more fertile and happier past. In the modern world, winter,

the time of forgetfulness and numbness, is indeed preferable. Marie's childhood recollections are also painful: the simple world of cousins, sledding, and coffee in the park has been replaced by a complex set of emotional and political consequences resulting from the war. The topic of memory, particularly when it involves remembering the dead, is of critical importance in *The Waste Land*. Memory creates a confrontation of the past with the present, a juxtaposition that points out just how badly things have decayed. Marie reads for most of the night: ostracized by politics, she is unable to do much else. To read is also to remember a better past, which could produce a coherent literary culture.

The second episode contains a troubled religious proposition. The speaker describes a true wasteland of "stony rubbish"; in it, he 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. The speaker remembers a female figure from his past, with whom he has apparently had some sort of romantic involvement. 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. Again memory serves to contrast the past with the present, but here it also serves to explode the idea of coherence in either place. In the episode from the past, the "nothingness" is more clearly a sexual failure, a moment of impotence. Despite the overall fecundity and joy of the moment, no reconciliation, and, therefore, no action, is possible. This in turn leads directly to the desert waste of the present. In the final line of the episode attention turns from the desert to the sea. Here, the sea is not a locus for the fear of nothingness, and neither is it the locus for a philosophical interpretation of nothingness; rather, it is the site of true, essential nothingness itself. The line comes from a section of *Tristan und Isolde* where Tristan waits for Isolde to come heal him. She is supposedly coming by ship but fails to arrive. The ocean is truly empty, devoid of the possibility of healing or revelation.

The third episode explores Eliot's fascination with transformation. The tarot reader Madame Sosostriis conducts the most outrageous form of "reading" possible, transforming a series of vague symbols into predictions, many of which will come true in succeeding sections of the poem. Eliot transforms the traditional tarot pack to serve his purposes. The drowned sailor makes reference to the ultimate work of magic and transformation in English literature, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* ("Those are pearls that were

his eyes" is a quote from one of Ariel's songs). Transformation in *The Tempest*, though, is the result of the highest art of humankind. Here, transformation is associated with fraud, vulgarity, and cheap mysticism. That Madame Sosostriis will prove to be right in her predictions of death and transformation is a direct commentary on the failed religious mysticism and prophecy of the preceding desert section.

The final episode of the first section allows Eliot finally to establish the true wasteland of the poem, the modern city. Eliot's London references Baudelaire's Paris ("Unreal City"), Dickens's London ("the brown fog of a winter dawn") and Dante's hell ("the flowing crowd of the dead"). The city is desolate and depopulated, inhabited only by ghosts from the past. Stetson, the apparition the speaker recognizes, is a fallen war comrade. The speaker pesters him with a series of ghoulish questions about a corpse buried in his garden: again, with the garden, we return to the theme of regeneration and fertility. This encounter can be read as a quest for a meaning behind the tremendous slaughter of the first World War; however, it can also be read as an exercise in ultimate futility: as we see in Stetson's failure to respond to the speaker's inquiries, the dead offer few answers. The great respective weights of history, tradition, and the poet's dead predecessors combine to create an oppressive burden.

The Waste Land Section II: "The Game of Chess"

Summary

This section takes its title from two plays by the early 17th-century playwright Thomas Middleton, in one of which the moves in a game of chess denote stages in a seduction. This section focuses on two opposing scenes, one of high society and one of the lower classes. The first half of the section portrays a wealthy, highly groomed woman surrounded by exquisite furnishings. As she waits for a lover, her neurotic thoughts become frantic, meaningless cries. Her day culminates with plans for an excursion and a game of chess. The second part of this section shifts to a London barroom, where two women discuss a third woman. Between the bartender's repeated calls of "HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME" (the bar is closing for the night) one of the women recounts a conversation with their friend Lil, whose husband has just been discharged from the army. She has chided Lil over her failure to get herself some false teeth, telling her that her husband will seek out the company of other women if she doesn't improve her appearance. Lil claims that the cause of her ravaged looks is the medication she took to induce an abortion; having nearly died giving birth to her fifth child, she had refused to have another, but her husband "won't leave [her] alone." The women leave the bar to a chorus of "good night(s)" reminiscent of Ophelia's farewell speech in *Hamlet*.

Form

The first part of the section is largely in unrhymed iambic pentameter lines, or blank verse: As the section proceeds, the lines become increasingly irregular in length and meter, giving the feeling of disintegration, of things falling apart. As the woman of the first half begins to give voice to her paranoid thoughts, things do fall apart, at least formally: We read lines of dialogue, then a snippet from a nonsense song. The last four lines of the first half rhyme, although they are irregular in meter, suggesting at least a partial return to stability.

The second half of the section is a dialogue interrupted by the barman's refrain. Rather than following an organized structure of rhyme and meter, this section constitutes a loose series of phrases connected by "I said(s)" and "she said(s)." This is perhaps the most poetically experimental section of the entire poem. Eliot is writing in a lower-class vernacular here that resists poetic treatment. This section refutes the prevalent claim that iambic pentameter mirrors normal English speech patterns: Line length and stresses are consistently irregular. Yet the section sounds like poetry: the repeated use of "I said" and the grounding provided by the barman's chorus allow the woman's speech to flow elegantly, despite her rough phrasing and the coarse content of her story.

Commentary

The two women of this section of the poem represent the two sides of modern sexuality: while one side of this sexuality is a dry, barren interchange inseparable from neurosis and self-destruction, the other side of this sexuality is a rampant fecundity associated with a lack of culture and rapid aging. The first woman is associated by allusion with Cleopatra, Dido, and even Keats's *Lamia*, by virtue of the lushness of language surrounding her (although Eliot would never have acknowledged Keats as an influence). She is a frustrated, overly emotional but not terribly intellectual figure, oddly sinister, surrounded by "strange synthetic perfumes" and smoking candles. She can be seen as a counterpart to the title character of Eliot's earlier "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," with whom she shares both a physical setting and a profound sense of isolation. Her association with Dido and Cleopatra, two women who committed suicide out of frustrated love, suggests her fundamental irrationality. Unlike the two queens of myth, however, this woman will never become a cultural touchstone. Her despair is pathetic, rather than moving, as she demands that her lover stay with her and tell her his thoughts. The lover, who seems to be associated with the narrator of this part of the poem, can think only of drowning (again, in a reference to *The Tempest*) and rats among dead men's bones. The woman is explicitly compared to Philomela, a character out of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* who is raped by her brother-in-

law the king, who then puts her tongue out to keep her quiet. She manages to tell her sister, who helps her avenge herself by murdering the king's son and feeding him to the king. The sisters are then changed into birds, Philomela into a nightingale. This comparison suggests something essentially disappointing about the woman, that she is unable to communicate her interior self to the world. The woman and her surroundings, although aesthetically pleasing, are ultimately sterile and meaningless, as suggested by the nonsense song that she sings (which manages to debase even Shakespeare).

The second scene in this section further diminishes the possibility that sex can bring regeneration—either cultural or personal. This section is remarkably free of the cultural allusions that dominate the rest of the poem; instead, it relies on vernacular speech to make its point. Notice that Eliot is using a British vernacular: By this point he had moved to England permanently and had become a confirmed Anglophile. Although Eliot is able to produce startlingly beautiful poetry from the rough speech of the women in the bar, he nevertheless presents their conversation as further reason for pessimism. Their friend Lil has done everything the right way—married, supported her soldier husband, borne children—yet she is being punished by her body. Interestingly, this section ends with a line echoing Ophelia's suicide speech in *Hamlet*; this links Lil to the woman in the first section of the poem, who has also been compared to famous female suicides. The comparison between the two is not meant to suggest equality between them or to propose that the first woman's exaggerated sense of high culture is in any way equivalent to the second woman's lack of it; rather, Eliot means to suggest that neither woman's form of sexuality is regenerative.

The Waste Land Section III: "The Fire Sermon"

Summary

The title of this, the longest section of *The Waste Land*, is taken from a sermon given by Buddha in which he encourages his followers to give up earthly passion (symbolized by fire) and seek freedom from earthly things. A turn away from the earthly does indeed take place in this section, as a series of increasingly debased sexual encounters concludes with a river-song and a religious incantation. The section opens with a desolate riverside scene: Rats and garbage surround the speaker, who is fishing and "musing on the king my brother's wreck." The river-song begins in this section, with the refrain from Spenser's *Prothalamion*: "Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song." A snippet from a vulgar soldier's ballad follows, then a reference back to Philomela (see the previous section). The speaker is then propositioned by Mr. Eugenides, the one-eyed merchant of Madame Sosostris's tarot pack. Eugenides invites the speaker to go with him to a hotel known as a meeting place for homosexual trysts.

The speaker then proclaims himself to be Tiresias, a figure from classical mythology who has both male and female features ("Old man with wrinkled female breasts") and is blind but can "see" into the future. Tiresias/the speaker observes a young typist, at home for tea, who awaits her lover, a dull and slightly arrogant clerk. The woman allows the clerk to have his way with her, and he leaves victorious. Tiresias, who has "toresuffered all," watches the whole thing. After her lover's departure, the typist thinks only that she's glad the encounter is done and over.

A brief interlude begins the river-song in earnest. First, a fisherman's bar is described, then a beautiful church interior, then the Thames itself. These are among the few moments of tranquility in the poem, and they seem to represent some sort of simpler alternative. The Thames-daughters, borrowed from Spenser's poem, chime in with a nonsense chorus ("Weialala leia/VVallala leialala"). The scene shifts again, to Queen Elizabeth I in an amorous encounter with the Earl of Leicester. The queen seems unmoved by her lover's declarations, and she thinks only of her "people humble people who expect/Nothing." The section then comes to an abrupt end with a few lines from St. Augustine's Confessions and a vague reference to the Buddha's Fire Sermon ("burning").

Form

This section of *The Waste Land* is notable for its inclusion of popular poetic forms, particularly musical ones. The more plot-driven sections are in Eliot's usual assortment of various line lengths, rhymed at random. "The Fire Sermon," however, also includes bits of many musical pieces, including Spenser's wedding song (which becomes the song of the Thames-daughters), a soldier's ballad, a nightingale's chirps, a song from Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and a mandolin tune (which has no words but is echoed in "a clatter and a chatter from within"). The use of such "low" forms cuts both ways here: In one sense, it provides a critical commentary on the episodes described, the cheap sexual encounters shaped by popular culture (the gramophone, the men's hotel). But Eliot also uses these bits and pieces to create high art, and some of the fragments he uses (the lines from Spenser in particular) are themselves taken from more exalted forms. In the case of the Prothalamion, in fact, Eliot is placing himself within a tradition stretching back to ancient Greece (classically, "prothalamion" is a generic term for a poem-like song written for a wedding). Again this provides an ironic contrast to the debased goings-on but also provides another form of connection and commentary. Another such reference, generating both ironic distance and proximate parallels, is the inclusion of Elizabeth I: The liaison between Elizabeth and Leicester is traditionally romanticized, and, thus, the reference seems to clash with the otherwise sordid nature of this section. However, Eliot depicts Elizabeth—and

Spenser, for that matter—as a mere fragment, stripped of noble connotations and made to represent just one more piece of cultural rubbish. Again, this is not meant to be a democratizing move but a nihilistic one: Romance is dead.

Commentary

The opening two stanzas of this section describe the ultimate "Waste Land" as Eliot sees it. The wasteland is cold, dry, and barren, covered in garbage. Unlike the desert, which at least burns with heat, this place is static, save for a few scurrying rats. Even the river, normally a symbol of renewal, has been reduced to a "dull canal." The ugliness stands in implicit contrast to the "Sweet Thames" of Spenser's time. The most significant image in these lines, though, is the rat. Like the crabs in *Prufrock*, rats are scavengers, taking what they can from the refuse of higher-order creatures. The rat could be said to provide a model for Eliot's poetic process: Like the rat, Eliot takes what he can from earlier, grander generations and uses the bits and pieces to sustain (poetic) life. Somehow this is preferable to the more coherent but vulgar existence of the contemporary world, here represented by the sound of horns and motors in the distance, intimating a sexual liaison.

The actual sexual encounters that take place in this section of the poem are infinitely unfruitful. Eugenides proposes a homosexual tryst, which by its very nature thwarts fertility. The impossibility of regeneration by such means is symbolized by the currants in his pocket—the desiccated, deadened version of what were once plump, fertile fruits. The typist and her lover are equally barren in their way, even though reproduction is at least theoretically possible for the two. Living in so impoverished a manner that she does not even own a bed, the typist is certainly not interested in a family. Elizabeth and Leicester are perhaps the most interesting of the three couples, however. For political reasons, Elizabeth was required to represent herself as constantly available for marriage (to royalty from countries with whom England may have wanted an alliance); out of this need came the myth of the "Virgin Queen." This can be read as the opposite of the Fisher King legend: To protect the vitality of the land, Elizabeth had to compromise her own sexuality; whereas in the Fisher King story, the renewal of the land comes with the renewal of the Fisher King's sexual potency. Her tryst with Leicester, therefore, is a consummation that is simultaneously denied, an event that never happened. The twisted logic underlying Elizabeth's public sexuality, or lack thereof, mirrors and distorts the Fisher King plot and further questions the possibility for renewal, especially through sexuality, in the modern world.

Tiresias, thus, becomes an important model for modern existence. Neither man nor woman, and blind yet able to see with ultimate clarity, he

is an individual who does not hope or act. He has, like Prufrock, "seen it all," but, unlike Prufrock, he sees no possibility for action. Whereas Prufrock is paralyzed by his neuroses, Tiresias is held motionless by ennui and pragmatism. He is not quite able to escape earthly things, though, for he is forced to sit and watch the sordid deeds of mortals; like the Sibyl in the poem's epigraph, he would like to die but cannot. The brief interlude following the typist's tryst may offer an alternative to escape, by describing a warm, everyday scene of work and companionship; however, the interlude is brief, and Eliot once again tosses us into a world of sex and strife. Tiresias disappears, to be replaced by St. Augustine at the end of the section. Eliot claims in his footnote to have deliberately conflated Augustine and the Buddha, as the representatives of Eastern and Western asceticism. Both seem, in the lines Eliot quotes, to be unable to transcend the world on their own: Augustine must call on God to "pluck [him] out," while Buddha can only repeat the word "burning," unable to break free of its monotonous fascination. The poem's next section, which will relate the story of a death without resurrection, exposes the absurdity of these two figures' faith in external higher powers. That this section ends with only the single word "burning," isolated on the page, reveals the futility of all of man's struggles.

The Waste Land Section IV: "Death by Water"

Summary

The shortest section of the poem, "Death by Water" describes a man, Phlebas the Phoenician, who has died, apparently by drowning. In death he has forgotten his worldly cares as the creatures of the sea have picked his body apart. The narrator asks his reader to consider Phlebas and recall his or her own mortality.

Form

While this section appears on the page as a ten-line stanza, in reading, it compresses into eight: four pairs of rhyming couplets. Both visually and audibly, this is one of the most formally organized sections of the poem. It is meant to recall other highly organized forms that often have philosophical or religious import, like aphorisms and parables. The alliteration and the deliberately archaic language ("o you," "a fortnight dead") also contribute to the serious, didactic feel of this section.

Commentary

The major point of this short section is to rebut ideas of renewal and regeneration. Phlebas just dies; that's it. Like Stetson's corpse in the first section, Phlebas's body yields nothing more than products of decay. However, the section's meaning is far from flat; indeed, its ironic layering is twofold. First, this section fulfills one of the prophecies of Madame Sosostris in the poem's first section: "Fear death by water," she says, after pulling the

card of the Drowned Sailor. Second, this section, in its language and form, mimics other literary forms (parables, biblical stories, etc.) that are normally rich in meaning. These two features suggest that something of great significance lies here. In reality, though, the only lesson that Phlebas offers is that the physical reality of death and decay triumphs over all. Phlebas is not resurrected or transfigured. Eliot further emphasizes Phlebas's dried-up antiquity and irrelevance by placing this section in the distant past (by making Phlebas a Phoenician).

The Waste Land Section V: "What the Thunder Said"

Summary

The final section of *The Waste Land* is dramatic in both its imagery and its events. The first half of the section builds to an apocalyptic climax, as suffering people become "hooded hordes swarming" and the "unreal" cities of Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London are destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again. A decaying chapel is described, which suggests the chapel in the legend of the Holy Grail. Atop the chapel, a cock crows, and the rains come, relieving the drought and bringing life back to the land. Curiously, no heroic figure has appeared to claim the Grail; the renewal has come seemingly at random, gratuitously.

The scene then shifts to the Ganges, half a world away from Europe, where thunder rumbles. Eliot draws on the traditional interpretation of "what the thunder says," as taken from the Upanishads (Hindu fables). According to these fables, the thunder "gives," "sympathizes," and "controls" through its "speech"; Eliot launches into a meditation on each of these aspects of the thunder's power. The meditations seem to bring about some sort of reconciliation, as a Fisher King-type figure is shown sitting on the shore preparing to put his 'lands in order, a sign of his imminent death or at least abdication. The poem ends with a series of disparate fragments from a children's song, from Dante, and from Elizabethan drama, leading up to a final chant of "Shantih shantih shantih"—the traditional ending to an Upanishad. Eliot, in his notes to the poem, translates this chant as "the peace which passeth understanding," the expression of ultimate resignation.

Form

Just as the third section of the poem explores popular forms, such as music, the final section of *The Waste Land* moves away from more typical poetic forms to experiment with structures normally associated with religion and philosophy. The proposition and meditation structure of the last part of this section looks forward to the more philosophically oriented *Four Quartets*, Eliot's last major work. The reasoned, structured nature of the final stanzas comes as a relief after the obsessively repetitive language

and alliteration ("If there were water/And no rock/If there were rock/And also water...") of the apocalyptic opening. The reader's relief at the shift in style mirrors the physical relief brought by the rain midway through the section. Both formally and thematically, then, this final chapter follows a pattern of obsession and resignation. Its patterning reflects the speaker's offer at the end to "fit you," to transform experience into poetry ("fit" is an archaic term for sections of a poem or play; here, "fit" is used as a verb, meaning "to render into a fit," to make into poetry).

Commentary

The initial imagery associated with the apocalypse at this section's opening is taken from the crucifixion of Christ. Significantly, though, Christ is not resurrected here: we are told, "He who was living is now dead." The rest of the first part, while making reference to contemporary events in Eastern Europe and other more traditional apocalypse narratives, continues to draw on Biblical imagery and symbolism associated with the quest for the Holy Grail. 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. Cities are destroyed rebuilt, and destroyed, mirroring the cyclical downfall of cultures: Jerusalem, Greece, Egypt, and Austria—among the major empires of the past two millennia—all see their capitals fall. There is something nevertheless insubstantial about this looming disaster: it seems "unreal," as the ghost-filled London did earlier in the poem. It is as if such a profound end would be inappropriate for such a pathetic civilization. Rather, we expect the end to be accompanied by a sense of boredom and surrender.

Release comes not from any heroic act but from the random call of a farmyard bird. The symbolism surrounding the Grail myth is still extant but it is empty, devoid of people. No one comes to the ruined chapel, yet it exists regardless of who visits it. This is a horribly sad situation: The symbols that have previously held profound meaning still exist, yet they are unused and unusable. A flash of light—a quick glimpse of truth and vitality, perhaps—releases the rain and lets the poem end.

The meditations upon the Upanishads give Eliot a chance to test the potential of the modern world. Asking, "What have we given?" he finds that the only time people give is in the sexual act and that this gift is ultimately evanescent and destructive: He associates it with spider webs and solicitors reading wills. Just as the poem's speaker fails to find signs of giving, so too does he search in vain for acts of sympathy—the second characteristic of "what the thunder says": He recalls individuals so caught up in his or her own fate—each thinking only of the key to his or her own prison—as to be oblivious to anything but "ethereal rumors" of others. The third idea expressed in the thunder's speech—that of control—holds the most

potential, although it implies a series of domineering relationships and surrenders of the self that, ultimately, are never realized.

Finally Eliot turns to the Fisher King himself, still on the shore fishing. The possibility of regeneration for the "arid plain" of society has been long ago discarded. Instead, the king will do his best to put in order what remains of his kingdom, and he will then surrender, although he still fails to understand the true significance of the coming void (as implied by the phrase "peace which passeth understanding"). The burst of allusions at the end can be read as either a final attempt at coherence or as a final dissolution into a world of fragments and rubbish. The king offers some consolation: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins," he says, suggesting that it will be possible to continue on despite the failed redemption. It will still be possible for him, and for Eliot, to "fit you," to create art in the face of madness. It is important that the last words of the poem are in a non-Western language: Although the meaning of the words themselves communicates resignation ("peace which passeth understanding"), they invoke an alternative set of paradigms to those of the Western world; they offer a glimpse into a culture and a value system new to us—and, thus, offer some hope for an alternative to our own dead world.

Check your progress

- 1. Write short note on the poem, "The Waste Land".**

- 2. Write about the style of the poem.**

- 3. Name the five parts of the poem.**

- 4. Write down the structure of the poem.**

- 5. What is the form of the poem, "The Waste Land"?**

- 6. Who is the protagonist of the poem, "The Waste Land"?**

SUMMARY

T.S. Eliot

- In October 1922 Eliot published *The Waste Land* in *The Criterion*. Eliot's dedication to *il miglior fabbro* ("the better craftsman") refers to Ezra Pound's significant hand in editing and reshaping the poem from a longer Eliot manuscript to the shortened version that appears in publication. It was composed during a period of personal difficulty for Eliot—his marriage was failing, and both he and Vivienne were suffering from nervous disorders. The poem is often read as a representation of the disillusionment of the post-war generation. That year Eliot lived in Lausanne, Switzerland to take a treatment and to convalesce from a break-down. There he wrote the final section, "What the Thunder Said," which contains frequent references to mountains. Before the poem's publication as a book in December 1922, Eliot distanced himself from its vision of despair. On November 15, 1922, he wrote to Richard Aldington, saying, "As for *The Waste Land*, that is a thing of the past so far as I am concerned and I am now feeling toward a new form and style." The poem is known for its obscure nature—its slippage between satire and prophecy; its abrupt changes of speaker, location, and time. Despite this, it has become a touchstone of modern literature, a poetic counterpart to a novel published in the same year, James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Among its best-known phrases are "April is the cruellest month", "I will show you fear in a handful of dust"; and "Shantih shantih shantih," the Sanskrit mantra that ends the poem.

KEY WORDS

1. Omniscient

Omniscience is the capacity to know everything infinitely, or at least everything that can be known about a character including thoughts, feelings, life and the universe, etc.

2. Mythology

The term mythology can refer to either the study of myths, or to a body of myths.

3. Reminiscence

Reminiscence is a technical term, coined by Ballard in 1913, denoting improvement in the performance of a partially learned act that occurs while the subject is resting, that is, not performing the act in question.

4. Hallucination

A hallucination, in the broadest sense of the word, is a perception in the absence of a stimulus.

5. Apocalypse

An Apocalypse is a disclosure of something hidden from the majority of mankind in an era dominated by falsehood and misconception, i.e. the veil to be lifted.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The Waste Land is a 434-line Modernist poem by T. S. Eliot published in 1922. It has been called "one of the most important poems of the 20th century." Despite the poem's obscurity—its shifts between satire and prophecy, its abrupt and unannounced changes of speaker, location and time, its elegiac but intimidating summoning up of a vast and dissonant range of cultures and literatures—the poem has become a familiar touchstone of modern literature.

2. The style of the work in part grows out of Eliot's interest in exploring the possibilities of dramatic monologue. This interest dates back at least as far as The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Of course, "The Waste Land" is not a single monologue like "Prufrock." Instead, it is made up of a wild variety of voices.

3. The poem is preceded by a Latin and Greek epigraph from The Satyricon of Petronius. In English, it reads: "I saw with my own eyes the Sibyl of Cumae hanging in a jar, and when the boys said to her, Sibyl, what do you want? she replied I want to die." Following the epigraph is a dedication (added in a 1925 republication) that reads "For Ezra Pound: il miglior fabbro" Here Eliot is both quoting line 117 of Canto XXVI of Dante's Purgatorio, the second cantica of The Divine Comedy, where Dante defines the troubadour Arnaut Daniel as "the best smith of the mother tongue" and also Pound's title of chapter 2 of his The Spirit of Romance (1910) where he translated the phrase as "the better craftsman."

4. The five parts of The Waste Land are entitled:

- The Burial of the Dead
- A Game of Chess
- The Fire Sermon
- Death by Water
- What the Thunder Said?

5. Just as the third section of the poem explores popular forms, such as music, the final section of The Waste Land moves away from more typical poetic forms to experiment with structures normally associated with religion and philosophy. The proposition and meditation structure of the last part of this section looks forward to the more philosophically oriented Four Quartets, Eliot's last major work. The reasoned, structured nature of the final stanzas comes as a relief after the obsessively repetitive language

and alliteration ("If there were water/ And no rock/If there were rock/And also water...") of the apocalyptic opening.

T.S. Eliot

6. The protagonist of the poem is Tiresias with wrinkled female ducks. He is aged but paradoxically is of all ages. His bisexuality endows him with a greater vision and understanding of all matters of life and death and the hereafter of all men and women, individually and collectively. He is the single vice and the many vices that one hears in the poem.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Eliot's picture of people in a pub shows contempt for ordinary humanity?
2. "Death by water" has been described as a lyrical interlude, a poem of serenity and a negative acceptance of death. What is your view?
3. Discuss the religious imagery in the poem.
4. The poem ends with a heap of broken images: How successful is this?
5. Write down the detailed summary of the poem, "The Waste Land".

FURTHER READINGS

- The Waste Land – T.S. Eliot
- T.S. Eliot's, "The Waste Land" – Harold Bloom
- T.S. Eliot: The Waste Land – Helen Williams
- T.S. Eliot the modernist in history – Ronald Bush.

UNIT-III

EZRA POUND

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Introduction
- The Waste Land
- Summary
- Key Words
- Answers to Check Your Progress
- Review Questions
- Further Readings

INTRODUCTION

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound was born on October 30, 1885. He was an expatriate American poet and critic, a major figure in the early modernist poetry movement and a fascist collaborator in Italy during World War II. His works include *Ripostes* (1912), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberlye* (1920), and his 800-page epic poem, *The Cantos* (c. 1917-1962). Pound's contribution to poetry began in the early 20th century with his role in developing Imagism, a movement stressing precision and economy of language. Working in London as foreign editor of several American literary magazines, he helped discover and shape the work of contemporaries such as T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, and James Joyce.

Angered by carnage of World War I, Pound blamed the war on finance capitalism, which he called "usury". He moved to Italy in 1924 and through the 1930s and 1940s promoted an economic theory known as social credit, wrote for publications owned by the British fascist Sir Oswald Mosley, embraced Benito Mussolini's fascism, and expressed support for Adolf Hitler. During World War II and the Holocaust in Italy, he made hundreds of paid radio broadcasts for the Italian government, including in German-occupied Italy, attacking the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt and, above all, Jews, as a result of which he was arrested in 1945 by American forces in Italy on charges of treason. He spent months in a U.S. military camp in Pisa, including three weeks in an outdoor steel cage. Deemed unfit

to stand trial, he was incarcerated in St. Elizabeths psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C., for over 12 years.

While in custody in Italy, Pound began work on sections of *The Cantos* that were published as *The Pisan Cantos* (1948), for which he was awarded the Bollingen Prize for Poetry in 1949 by the Library of Congress, causing enormous controversy. After a campaign by his fellow writers, he was released from St. Elizabeths in 1958 and lived in Italy until his death in 1972. His political views have ensured that his life and work remain controversial.

Early life and education (1885-1908)

Family background

Pound was born in a two-story clapboard house in Hailey, Idaho Territory, the only child of Homer Loomis Pound (1858-1942) and Isabel Weston (1860-1948), who married in 1884. Homer had worked in Hailey since 1883 as registrar of the General Land Office. Pound's grandfather, Thaddeus Coleman Pound, a Republican Congressman and the 10th Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, had secured him the appointment. Homer had previously worked for Thaddeus in the lumber business.

Both sides of Pound's family emigrated from England in the 17th century. On his father's side, the immigrant ancestor was John Pound, a Quaker who arrived from England around 1650. Ezra's paternal grandmother, Susan Angevine Loomis, married Thaddeus Coleman Pound. On his mother's side, Pound was descended from William Wadsworth, a Puritan who emigrated to Boston on the *Lion* in 1632. Captain Joseph Wadsworth helped to write the Connecticut constitution. The Wadsworths married into the Westons of New York; Harding Weston and Mary Parker were Pound's maternal grandparents. After serving in the military, Harding remained unemployed, so his brother Ezra Weston and Ezra's wife, Frances Amelia Wessells Freer (Aunt Frank), helped to look after Isabel, Pound's mother.

EARLY EDUCATION

In his Cheltenham Military Academy uniform with his mother, 1898.

Isabel Pound was unhappy in Hailey and took Ezra with her to New York in 1887 when he was 18 months old. Her husband followed and found a job as an assayer at the Philadelphia Mint. The family moved to Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. Pound's education began in dame schools: Miss Elliott's school in Jenkintown in 1892 and the Heathcock family's Cheltenham Hills School in Wyncote in 1893. Known as "Ra" (pronounced "Ray"), he attended Wyncote Public School from September 1894. His first publication

was on 7 November 1896 in the *Jenkintown Times-Chronicle* ("by E.L. Pound, Wyncote, aged 11 years"). In 1897, aged 12, he transferred to Cheltenham Military Academy (CMA), where he wore an American Civil War-style uniform and was taught drilling and how to shoot.

University

In 1901 Pound was admitted, aged 15, to the University of Pennsylvania's College of Liberal Arts. Years later he said his aim was to avoid drill at the military academy. His one distinction in first year was in geometry, but otherwise his grades were mostly poor, including in Latin, his major; he achieved a B in English composition and a pass in English literature. In his second year he switched from the degree course to "non-degree special student status", he said "to avoid irrelevant subjects". His parents and Aunt Frank took him on another three-month European tour in 1902.

TEACHING

From September 1907 Pound taught French and Spanish at Wabash College, a Presbyterian college with 345 students in Crawfordsville, Indiana, which he called "the sixth circle of hell". One former student remembered him as a breath of fresh air; another said he was "exhibitionist, egotistic, self-centered and self-indulgent".

He was dismissed after a few months. Smoking was forbidden, but he would smoke cigarillos in his room in the same corridor as the president's office. Shocked at having been fired, he left for Europe soon after, sailing from New York in March on the RMS *Slavonia*.

London (1908-1914)

Pound arrived in Gibraltar on 23 March 1908, where he earned \$15 a day working as a guide for an American family there and in Spain. In the summer he decided to self-publish his first collection of 44 poems in the 72-page *A Lume Spento* ("With Tapers Quenched"), 150 copies of which were printed in July 1908. The title is from the third canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*, alluding to the death of Manfred, King of Sicily. Pound dedicated the book to the Philadelphia artist William Brooke Smith, a friend from university who had recently died of tuberculosis.

MOVE TO LONDON

In August 1908 Pound moved to London, carrying 60 copies of *A Lume Spento*. According to modernist scholar James Knapp, Pound rejected the idea of poetry as "versified moral essay"; he wanted to focus on the individual experience, the concrete rather than the abstract.

Pound at first stayed in a boarding house at 8 Duchess Street, near the British Museum Reading Room; he had met the landlady during his travels in Europe in 1906.

MEETING DOROTHY SHAKESPEARE, PERSONAE

Pound married Dorothy Shakespear in 1914.

At a literary salon in 1909, Pound met the novelist Olivia Shakespear. Dorothy, who became Pound's wife in 1914.

He visited a friend, Walter Rummel, in Paris in March 1910 and was introduced to the American heiress and pianist Margaret Lanier Cravens.

The Spirit of Romance, Canzoni, the New Age

In June 1910 Pound returned for eight months to the United States; his arrival coincided with the publication in London of his first book of literary criticism, *The Spirit of Romance*, based on his lecture notes from the polytechnic. *Patria Mia*, his essays on the United States, were written at this time. In August he moved to New York. Although he loved New York, he felt alienated by the commercialism and newcomers from Eastern and Southern Europe who were displacing the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. It was during this period that his antisemitism became apparent; he referred in *Patria Mia* to the "detestable qualities" of Jews. After persuading his parents to finance his passage back to Europe, he sailed from New York on the R.M.S. *Mauretania* on 22 February 1911. It was nearly 30 years—April 1939—before he visited the U.S. again.

After three days in London he went to Paris, where he worked on a new collection of poetry, *Canzoni* (1911), panned by the *Westminster Gazette* as "affectation combined with pedantry". When he returned to London in August, he rented a room in Marylebone then shared a house at 39 Addison Road North, W11. By November A.R. Orage, editor of the socialist journal *the New Age*, had hired him to write a weekly column. Orage appears in *The Cantos* "but the lot of 'em,". Pound contributed to *the New Age* from 30 November 1911 to 13 January 1921, attending editorial meetings. In the *New Age* office in 1918, he also met C.H. Douglas, a British engineer who was developing his economic theory of social credit, which Pound found attractive. Douglas reportedly believed that Jews were a problem and needed to abandon a Messianic view of themselves as the "dominating race". Pound first encountered antisemitic ideas about "usury". "Pound and found his true muse : a blend of folkloric Celtic twilight with a paranoid hatred of the money economy and a dire suspicion about an ancient faith".

London W8. Pound lived on the first floor (far left) in 1909-1910 and 1911-1914.

Pound introduced Doolittle to his friends, including Richard Aldington, who became her husband in 1913. Before that, the three of them lived in Church walk-Kensington.

At the British Museum, Laurence Binyon introduced Pound to the East Asian artistic and literary concepts Pound used in his later poetry, including Japanese ukiyo-e prints. The visitor's book first shows Pound in the Prints and Drawings Student's Room (known as the Print Room) on 9 February 1909, and later in 1912 and 1913, with Dorothy Shakespear, examining Chinese and Japanese art. Pound was working at the time on the poems that became *Ripostes* (1912), trying to move away from his earlier work. "I hadn't in 1910 made a language," he wrote years later. "I don't mean a language to use, but even a language to think in."

In August 1912 Harriet Monroe hired Pound as foreign correspondent of *Poetry*: *Ripostes* of Ezra Pound, a collection of 25 poems, including a contentious translation of the 8th-century Old English poem. In addition to Pound's work, the collection contains five poems by T.E. Hulme.

First edition of *Poetry*, October 1912

Ripostes includes the first mention of Les Imagistes: "As for the future, Le Imagistes, the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909, have that in their keeping." While in the British Museum tearoom one afternoon with Doolittle and Aldington, Pound edited one of Doolittle's poems and wrote "H.D. Imagiste" underneath; he described this later as the founding of a movement in poetry, Imagisme. In the spring or early summer of 1912, they agreed, Pound wrote in 1918, on three principles:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

Poetry published Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagist" in March 1913. He wrote: "It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the adequate symbol." Poets should "go in fear of abstractions". He wanted Imagisme "to stand for hard light, clear edges", he wrote later to Amy Lowell.

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :

Petals on a wet, black bough.

Ezra Pound

—Poetry (April 1913) An example of Imagist poetry is Pound's "In a Station of the Metro", published in Poetry in April 1913 and inspired by an experience in the Paris Underground.

JAMES JOYCE, POUND'S UNPOPULARITY

James Joyce, c. 1918

In the summer of 1913 Pound became literary editor of *The Egoist*, a journal founded by the suffragette Dora Marsden. At the suggestion of W.B. Yeats, Pound encouraged James Joyce in December that year to submit his work.

Pound to accompany him as his secretary and it was during this visit that Yeats introduced Pound to Joyce's *Chamber Music* and his "I hear an Army Charging Upon the Land". This was the first of three winters Pound and Yeats spent at Stone Cottage, including two with Dorothy after she and Ezra married in 1914. "Canto LXXXIII" records a visit :

In his reply to Pound, Joyce gave permission to use "I hear an Army" and enclosed *Dubliners* and the first chapter of his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Pound wrote to Joyce that the novel was "damn fine stuff".

Marriage

Ezra and Dorothy were married on 20 April 1914 at St. Mary Abbots in Kensington, the Shakespears' parish church, despite opposition from her parents, who worried about Ezra's income. His concession to marry in church had helped. After the wedding the couple moved into an apartment.

Des Imagistes, dispute with Army Lowell.

Pound by Wyndham Lewis, 1919. The portrait is lost.

The appearance of *Des Imagistes*, *An Anthology* (1914), edited by Pound, "confirmed the importance" of Imagisme, according to Ira Nadel.

WORLD WAR I AND LEAVING ENGLAND (1914-1921)

Meeting Eliot, *Cathay*, translation

When war was declared in August 1914, opportunities for writers were immediately reduced; poems were now expected to be patriotic. Pound earned 42 over the next year, apparently five times less than the year before.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Pound wrote to Harriet Monroe, editor of *Poetry*, on 30 September to say that Eliot who was at Oxford on a

THE RIVER MERCHANT'S WIFE : A LETTER

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.
At fifteen, I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever and forever.
Why should I climb the look out?

—"The River Merchant's Wife : A Letter", Cathay (1915)

Pound's *Cathay*, published in April 1915, contains 25 examples of Classical Chinese poetry that Pound translated into English based on the notes of the Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa.

Fenollosa's widow, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, had given Pound her husband's notes in 1913, after Laurence Binyon introduced them. Michael Alexander saw *Cathay* as the most attractive of Pound's work.

Pound's translations from Old English, Latin, Italian, French and Chinese were highly disputed. According to Alexander, they made him more unpopular in some circles than the treason charge.

Pound was devastated when Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, from whom he had commissioned a sculpture of himself two years earlier, was killed in the trenches in June 1915.

"Three Cantos", resignation from *Poetry*

After the publication of *Cathay*, Pound mentioned that he was working on a long poem. He described it in September 1915 as a "cryselephantine poem of immeasurable length which will occupy me for the next four decades unless it becomes a bore". In February 1916, when Pound was 30, the poet Carl Sandburg paid tribute to him in *Poetry* magazine. Pound "stains darkly and touches softly", he wrote :

Pound by E. O. Hoppe on the cover of *Pavannes and Divisions* (1918)

In June, July and August 1917 Pound had the first three cantos published, as "Three Cantos", in *Poetry*. He was now a regular contributor to three literary magazines. From 1917 he wrote music reviews for the *New Age* as William Atheling and art reviews as B. H. Dias. In May 1917 Margaret Anderson hired him as foreign editor of the *Little Review*. He also

wrote weekly pieces for *The Egoist* and the *Little Review*; many of the latter complained about provincialism, which included the ringing of church bells. The volume of writing exhausted him. In 1918, after about of illness which was presumably the Spanish flu, he decided to stop writing for the *Little Review*.

OR three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start—
No hardly, but, seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of data;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

—Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (1920)

By 1919 Pound felt there was no reason to stay in England. He had become "violently hostile" to England.

Published by John Rodker's *The Ovid Press* in June 1920, Pound's poem *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* marked his farewell to London and by December the Pounds were subletting their apartment and preparing to move to France. Consisting of 18 short parts, *Mauberley* describes a poet whose life has become sterile and meaningless. It begins with a satirical analysis of the London literary scene before turning to social criticism, economics, and the war. Here the word *usury* first appears in his work. Pound denied he was *Mauberley*. In 1932 the critic F. R. Leavis, then director of studies in English at Downing College, Cambridge, called *mauberley* "great poetry, at once traditional and original. Mr. Pound's standing as a poet rests on it, and rests securely."

On 13 January 1921 Orage wrote in the *New Age*: "Mr. Pound has shaken the dust of London from his feet with not too emphatic a gesture of disgust, but, at least, without gratitude to this country. ... [He] has been an exhilarating influence for culture in England; he has left his mark upon more than one of the arts, upon literature, music, poetry and sculpture; and quite a number of men and movements owe their initiation to his self-sacrificing stimulus ..."

With all this, however, Mr. Pound, like so many others who have striven for advancement of intelligence and culture in England.

Diagnosi

During a case conference at St. Elizabeths on 28 January 1946, six psychiatrists had concluded that Pound suffered from psychopathic personality disorder but was not psychotic. In 1952 the American Psychiatric Association published its first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-1), and St. Elizabeths began diagnosing patients according to its definitions. In July 1953 a psychiatrist added to Pound's notes that he probably suffered from narcissistic personality disorder. The main feature of Pound's personality, he wrote, was his "profound, incredible, over-weaning (sic) narcissism". A personality disorder, unlike conditions that give rise to psychosis, is not regarded as a mental illness, and the diagnosis would have made Pound fit to stand trial. On 31 May 1955, at the request of the hospital's superintendent Winfred Overholser, the diagnosis was changed to "psychotic disorder, undifferentiated", which is classified as mental illness. In 1966, after his release from St. Elizabeths, Pound was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Italy (1958-1972)

Depression

Pound and Dorothy arrived in Naples on the *Christoforo Colombo* on 9 July 1958, where Pound was photographed giving a fascist salute to the waiting press. When asked when he had been released from the mental hospital, he replied: "I never was. When I left the hospital I was still in America, and all America is an insane asylum." They were accompanied by a young teacher Pound had met in Hospital, Marella Spann, ostensibly acting as his secretary.

Pound met his grandchildren for the first time. Dorothy had usually ignored his affairs, but she used her legal power over his royalties to make sure Spann was seen off, sent back to the United States in October 1959.

By December Pound was mired in depression. According to the writer Michael Reck, who visited him several times at St. Elizabeths, Pound was a changed man; he said little and called his work "worthless". In a 1960 interview in Rome with Donald Hall for *Paris Review*, he said: "You—find me—in fragments."

Those close to him thought he was suffering from dementia and in mid-1960 he spent time in a clinic when his weight dropped picked up again, but by early 1961 he had a urinary tract infection.

In 1961 Pound attended a meeting in Rome in honor of Oswald Mosley, who was visiting Italy. His health continued to decline. Grazia Levi: "I

spoil everything I touch. ... All my life I believed I knew nothing, yes, knew nothing. And so words became devoid of meaning." He attended Eliot's funeral in London and visited W.B. Yeats' widow in Dublin (Yeats died in 1939). In 1966 he was admitted to the Genoa School of Medicine's psychiatric hospital for an evaluation after prostate surgery.

According to a psychiatrist who treated him, Pound had previously been treated with electroconvulsive therapy. The doctors diagnosed bipolar disorder. Two years later he attended the opening of an exhibition in New York featuring his blue-inked version of Eliot's *The Waste Land*. He went on to Hamilton College and received a standing ovation.

Death

Shortly before his death in 1972, an American Academy of Arts and Sciences committee, which included his publisher James Laughlin, proposed that Pound be awarded the Emerson-Thoreau Medal. In the foreword of a Faber & Faber volume of his prose, he wrote in July.

On his 87th birthday, on 30 October 1972, he was too weak to leave his bedroom. Venice, where he died in his sleep on 1 November of "sudden blockage of the intestine". Dorothy Pound, who was living in a care home near Cambridge, England, requested a Protestant funeral in Venice.

Pound had wanted to be buried in Idaho with his bust by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska on his grave. Dorothy Pound died in England the following year, aged 87. Olga Rudge died in 1996, aged 100, and was buried next to Pound.

Pound was an American patriot. In advertisements, magazine articles, and critical introductions, Pound's friends and publishers attributed his antisemitism and fascism to mental illness. Literary scholar Betsy Erkkila write that no one was more important to Pound's rehabilitation than Hugh Kenner.

Legacy

—Closing lines of *The Cantos*

Much of Pound's legacy lies in his advancement of some of the best-known modernist writers of the early 20th century.

Over the decades, according to Redman, critics argued that Pound was not really a poet or not really a fascist, or that he was a fascist but his poetry is not fascistic, or that there was an evil Pound and a good Pound.

HUGH SELWYN MAUBERLEY [PART I]

BY EZRA POUND

E.P. ODE POUR L'ELECTION DE SON SEPULCHRE

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start—

No, hardly, but, seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait:

"Idmen gar toi panth, oseni Troie
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Falubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"
He passed from men's memory in *l'an trentiesme*
De son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

II

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Note at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The “age demanded” chiefly a mould in plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
Or the “sculpture” of rhyme.

III

The tea-rose, tea-gown, etc.
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,
The pianola “replaces”
Sappho’s barbitos.
Christ follows Dionysus,
Phallic and ambrosial
Made way for macerations;
Caliban casts out Ariel.
All thigs are a flowing,

Sage Heracleitus says;
But a tawdry cheapness
Shall reign throughout our days.

Even the Christian Beauty
Defect—after Samothrace;
We see to *Kalon*
Decreed in the market place.

Faun’s flesh is not to us,
Nor the saint’s vision.
We have the press for wafer;
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.
Free of Peisistratus,
We choose a knave or an eunuch
To rule over us.

A bright Apollo,

tin andra, tin aroa, tina theon,

What god, man, or hero

Shall I place a tin wreath upon?

IV

These fought, in any case,

and some believing, pro domo, in any case ...

Some quick to arm,

some for adventure,

some from fear of weakness,

some from fear of censure,

some for love of slaughter, in imagination,

learning later ...

some in fear, learning love of slaughter;

Died some pro patria, non dulce non et decor" ...

walked eye-deep in hell

believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving

came home, home to a lie,

home to many deceits,

home to old lies and new infamy;

usury age-old and age-thick

and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.

Young blood and high blood,

Fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,

disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

V

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization.

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

YEUX GLAUQUES

Gladstone was still respected,
When John Ruskin produced
"Kings Treasuries"; Swinburne
And Rossetti still abused.

Foetid Buchanan lifted up his voice
When that faun's head of hers
Became a pastime for
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartons
Have preserved her eyes;
Still, at the Tate, they teach
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,
With a vacant gaze.
The English Rubaiyat was still-born

In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same
Still darts out faun-like from the half-ruin'd face,
Questing and passive ...
"As, poor Jenny's case" ...

Bewildered that a world
Shows no surprise
At her last maquero's
Adulteries.

"SIENA MI FE, DISFECEMI MAREMMA"
Among the pickled foetuses and bottled bones,
Engaged in perfecting the catalogue,
I found the last scion of the
Senatorial families of Strasbourg, Monsieur Verog.

For two hours he talked of Gallifet;
Of Dowson; of the Rhymers' Club;
Told me how Johnson (Lionel) died
By falling from a high stool in a pub ...

But showed no trace of alcohol
At the autopsy, privately performed—
Tissue preserved—the pure mind
Arose toward Newman as the whiskey warmed.

Dowson found harlots cheaper than hotels;
Headlam for uplift; Image impartially imbued
With raptures for Bacchus, Terpsichore and the Church.
So spoke the author of "The Dorian Mood,"

M. Verog, out of step with the decade,

Detached from his contemporaries,
Neglected by the young,
Because of these reveries.

BRENNEBAUM

The sky-like limpid eyes,
The circular infant's face,
The stiffness from spats to collar
Never relaxing into grace;

The heavy memories of Horeb, Sinai and the forty years,
Showed only when the daylight fell
Level across the face
Of Brennbaum "The Impeccable."

MR. NIXON

In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht
Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer
Dangers of delay. "Consider" Carefully the reviewer.

"I was as poor as you are;
"When I began I got, of course,
"Advance on royalties, fifty at first," said Mr. Nixon,
"Follow me, and take a column,
"Even if you have to work free.

"Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred
"I rose in eighteen months;
"The hardest nut I had to crack
"Was Dr. Dundas.

"I never mentioned a man but with the view
"Of selling my own works.
"The tip's a good ne, as for literature

"I gives no man a sinecure."

And no one knows, at sight a masterpiece.

And give up verse, my boy,

There's nothing in it."

* * * *

Likewise a friend of Bloughram's once advised me :

Don't kick against the pricks,

Accept opinion. The "Nineties" tried your game

And died, there's nothing in it.

X

Beneath the sagging roof

The stylist has taken shelter,

Unpaid, uncelebrated,

At last from the world's welter

Nature receives him,

With a placid and uneducated mistress

He exercises his talents

And the soil meets his distress.

The haven from sophistications and contentions

Leaks through its thatch;

He offers succulent cooking;

The door has a creaking latch.

XI

"Conservatrix of Milesien"

Habits of mind and feeling,

Possibly. But in Ealing

With the most bank-clerkly of Englishmen?

No, "Milesian" is an exaggeration.

No instinct has survived in her

Older than those her grandmother

Told her would fir her station.

Ezra Pound

XII

“Daphne with her thighs in bark
Stretches toward me her leafy hands,”—
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room
I await The Lady Valentine’s commands,

Knowing my coat has never been
Of precisely the fashion
To stimulate, in her,
A durable passion;

Doubtful, somewhat, of the value
Of well-gowned approbation
Of literary effort,
But never of The Lady Valentine’s vocation:

Poetry, her border of ideas,
The edge, uncertain, but a means of blending
With other strata
Where the lower and higher have ending;

A hook to catch the Lady Jane’s attention,
A modulation towards the theatre,
Also, in the case of revolution,
A possible friend and comforter.

* * * *

Conduct, on the other hand, the soul
“Which the highest cultures have nourished”
To Fleet St. where
Dr. Johnson flourished;

Beside this thoroughfare

The sale of half-hose has
Long since superseded the cultivation
Of Pierian roses.

Envoi (1919)

Go, dumb-born book,
Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes :
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subject known,
Then were there cause in thee that should condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie
And build her flories their longevity.

Tell her that sheds
Such treasure in the air,
Recking naught else but that her graces give
Life to the moment,
I would bid them live
As roses might, in magic amber laid,
Red overwrought with orange and all made
One substance and one colour
Braving time.

Tell her that goes
With song upon her lips
But sings not out the song, nor knows
The maker of it, some other mouth,
May be as fair as hers,
Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers,
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be laid,
Siftings on fitings in oblivion,
Till change hath broken down
All things save Beauty alone.

BY EZRA POUND

1920 (Mauberley)

I

Turned from the "eau-forte
Par jaquemart"
To the strait head
Of Messalina:

"His True Penelope
Was Flaubert,"
And his tool
The engraver's.

Firmness,
Not the full smile,
His art, but an art
In profile;

Colourless
Pier Francesca,
Pisanello lacking the skill
To forge Achaia.

II

"Qu'est ce qu'ils savent de l' amour, et qu'est ce qu'ils peuvent comprendre?"

S'ils ne comprennent pas la poesie, s'ils ne sentent pas la musique, qu'est ce qu'ils peuvent comprendre de cette passion en comparaison avec laquelle la rose est grossiere et le parfum des violettes un tonnerre?"—CAID ALI

For three years, diabolus in the scale,
He drank ambrosia,
All passes, ANANGKE prevails,
Came end, at last, to that Arcadia.

He had moved amid her phantasmagoria,
Amid her galaxies,

NUKTIS' AGALMA

.
Drifted ... drifted precipitate
Asking time to be rid of ...
Of his bewilderment; to designate
His new found orchid. ...

To be certain ... certain ...
(Amid aerial flowers) ... time for arrangements—
Drifted on
To the final estrangement;

Unable in the supervening blankness
To sift TO AGATHON from the chaff
Until he found his sieve ...
Ultimately, his seismograph :
—Given that is his “fundamental passion,”
This urge to convey the relation
Of eye-lid and cheek-bone
By verbal manifestations;

To present the series
Of curious heads in medallion—

He had passed, inconscient, full gaze,
The wise-banded irides
And botticellian sprays implied
In their diastasis;

Which anaesthesia, noted a year late,
And weighed, revealed his great affect,

(Orchid), mandate
Of Eros, a retrospect.

Ezra Pound

.
Mouths biting empty air,
The still stone dogs,
Caught in metamorphosis, were
Left him as epilogues.

"THE AGE DEMANDED"

VIDE POEM II.

For this agility chance found
Him of all men, unfit
As the red-beaked steeds of
The Cytheraeon for a chain bit.

The glow of porcelain
Brought no reforming sense
To his perception
Of the social inconsequence.

Thus, if her colour
Came against his gaze,
Tempered as if
It were through a perfect glaze

He made no immediate application
Of this to relation of the state
To the individual, the month was more temperate
Because this beauty had been.

.
The coral isle, the lion-coloured sand
Burst in upon the porcelain revery:
Impetuous troubling
Of his imagery.

.
Mildness, amid the neo-Nietzschean clatter,
His sense of graduations,
Quite out of place amid
Resistance to current exacerbations,
Invitation, mere invitation to perceptivity
Gradually led him to the isolation
Which these presents place
Under a more tolerant, perhaps, examination.
By constant elimination

The manifest universe
Yielded an armour
Against utter consternation,

A Minoan undulation,
Seen, we admit, amid ambrosial circumstances
Strengthened him against
The discouraging doctrine of chances,

And his desire for survival,
Faint in the most strenuous moods,
Became an Olympian apatheia
In the presence of selected perceptions.

A pale gold, in the aforesaid pattern,
The unexpected palms
Destroying, certainly, the artist's urge,
Left him delighted with the imaginary
Audition of the phantasmal sea-surge,

Incapable of the least utterance or composition,
Emendation, conservation of the "better tradition,"
Refinement of medium, elimination of superfluities,

August attraction or concentration.

Ezra Pound

Nothing, in brief, but maudlin confession,
Irresponse to human aggression,
Amid the precipitation, down-float
Of insubstantial manna,
Lifting the faint susurrus
Of his subjective hosannah.

Ultimate affronts to human redundancies;

Non-esteem of self-styled "his betters"
Leading, as he well knew,
To his final
Exclusion from the world of lettes.

IV

Scattered Moluccas
Not knowing, day to day,
The first day's end, in the next noon;
The placid water
Unbroken by the Simoon;

Thick foliage
Placid beneath warm suns,
Tawn fore-shores
Washed in the cobalt of oblivions;

Or through dawn-mist
The grey and rose
Of the juridical
Flamingoes;
A consciousness disjunct,
Being but this overblotted

Series

Of intermittences;

Coracle of Pacific voyages,

The unforecasted beach;

Then on an oar

Read this:

"I was

And I no more exist;

"Here drifted

An hedonist."

MEDALLION

Luini in porecelain!

The grand piano

Utters a profane

Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges

From the gold-yellow frock

As Anadyomene in the opening

Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,

A basket-work of braids which seem as if they were

Spun in King Minos' hall

From metal, or intractable amber;

The face-oval beneath the glaze,

Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,

Beneath half-watt rays,

The eyes turn topaz.

The name "Selwyn" might have been an homage to Rhymers' Club member Selwyn Image. The name and personality of the titular subject are also reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's main character in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

A SHORT ANALYSIS OF EZRA POUND'S HUGH SELWYN MAUBERLEY

Understanding the Poem

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley is a long poem by a modernist, American-born poet Ezra Pound. He wrote this poem in the year 1920. It was a turning point in Pound's career (by F.R. Leavis and others), and its completion was swiftly followed by his departure from England. He described this poem as his 'Farewell to London'.

The poem consists of eighteen short poems which are grouped into two sections. The first is an autobiography of Ezra Pound himself, as indicated by the title of the first poem, which reads "E.P. Ode pour l'élection de son sepulchre" ("Ezra Pound : Ode for the Choice of His Sepulchre"). The second section introduces us to the struggling poet "Mauberley's" character, career and fate. Readers have been misled by the fact that Pound assigns to every poem a title or, alternatively, a number. Thus poem I, "E.P. Ode pour l'Élection de Son Sepulchre", is followed by poems II-V, that are numbered, while poems VI to IX are again given individual titles.

A brief analysis

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley addresses Pound's alleged failure as a poet. F.R. Leavis considered it "quintessential autobiography. Speaking of himself in the third person, Pound criticises his earlier works as attempts to "wring lilies from the acorn", that is to pursue aesthetic goals and art for art's sake in a rough setting, America, which he calls "a half-savage country". "For three years, out of key with his time. He strove to resuscitate the dead art of poetry" resonates with Pound's efforts to write in traditional forms (e.g., Canzoni, 1911) and subsequent disillusionment. Pound in his mock-epitaph is said to be "wrong from the start", but this is quickly qualified: "No, hardly-". The rest of the poem is essentially a defense of Pound, who, like Capaneus, was fighting against the unsurmountable flood of philistinism.

In the third stanza, Pound is said to have listened to the song of Homer's Sirens (quoted in Greek : "We know all the things that belong to Troy"), to have confronted dangers and ignored the warnings of the prudent. This has led inevitably to his being dismissed as an outsider and

forgotten by the bookish establishment, "in the 31st year of his life", i.e. circa 1916, when Pound published *Lustra*.

In Poems II and III, Pound turns the tables upon the philistine modern age, denouncing its materialism, consumerism, bad taste and betrayal of tradition. Poems IV and V express Pound's outrage at World War I, a murderous product of that very age that has dismissed him : "There died a myriad. And of the best, among them, For an old bitch gone in the teeth. For a botches civilisation."

This section can be read as a wider attack upon the attitudes of society in the post-war period, on a "botched civilisation"- denounced as an intellectual and moral 'Waste Land' only two years later by T. S. Eliot. The exclamation "Better mendacities/Than the classics in paraphrase!" seems to be a quip at the expense of those who continue to revere the idealistic "lies" and to dismiss works that draw on valuable traditional texts, such as Pound's own *Homage to Sextus Propertius*.

Poems VI-XII are a brief overview of British culture as Pound found it when he arrived in London in 1908, starting with the Pre-Raphaelites and the Rhymers' Club, and closing with vignettes of three writers (Max Beerbohm, Arnold Bennett, Ford Madox Ford), a suburban wife and a bookish hostess.

Poem XII formally closes with a criticism of the current tastes and concerns of society :

Beside this thoroughfare
The sale of half-hose has
Long since superseded the cultivation
Of Pierian roses. (lines 216-219)

As "Pierian roses" refers to the place in Greece where the Muses were worshiped, the charge is that society has become absorbed in commodities and lost its taste for art.

Part I terminates with "Envoi", i.e. "Farewell", a poem printed in italics in which Pound in fact "resuscitates the dead art of poetry" (as he had said in Poem I) by addressing a singer in "canorous lyric measures" (Leavis). "Envoi (1919)" ends on a positive note. Its last lines are: "Till change hath broken down / All things save Beauty alone."

The second part of the poem, "Mauberley 1920," introduces the character Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, a minor poet who perfects refined but irrelevant artworks, or "medallions". His defeat is told (by Pound) in Poem I in short minimalist lines, of the kind that Mauberley himself would write. Poem II tells us of Mauberley's love-troubles, suggesting that he observed beauty but could not act at the right moment (as a Henry James character,

see for example. “The Beast in the Jungle”, and Eliot’s Prufrock). Poem III is a narrative criticism of Mauberley as aesthete, and Poem IV closes his story by telling us that he retired and expired in the Pacific islands. Like Part I, Part II has a farewell poem, “Medallion”, the description of a female singer, seen as a work of art rather than as a woman. This poem has usually been read by critics as “written by Mauberley”, an example of his kind of frosty albeit perfect writing. Mauberley in his passiveness is distinct from Pound, who however pursued for a while similar ideals of artistic perfection and was attracted by life in beautiful and remote natural surroundings. By moving to Italy in 1925, Pound in a way exiled himself like Mauberley, while becoming increasingly involved in the conflicts of his age. Thus in Mauberley Pound portrayed and criticised certain aspects of himself, as Eliot had done in The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Yet while Prufrock is ironic, Mauberley is largely a work of satire, reminiscence and invective, like The Cantos.

A SHORT ANALYSIS OF EZRA POUND’S HUGH SELWYN MAUBERLEY

A reading of Pound’s poem

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (1920) is a long poem by the American-born modernist poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972), who described the poem as his ‘farewell to London’. It is partly a response to the First World War, but it is more self-reflexively about the artist or poet’s role in the wake of the war: whereas another great long poem of the early 1920s, T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, would address this issue in only an oblique sense, Ezra Pound’s poem tackles the issue more directly, being an analysis of the role of poetry in a world torn apart by conflict and mass carnage, and about Pound’s own struggle to recover the ‘dead art’ of poetry in the years leading up to the war. So, as well as being about poetry itself, Hugh Selwyn Mauberley is also about World War I and the effect of the war and its after effects on the generation to which Pound belonged his earlier associate, T. E. Hulme, had been killed in the war in 1917.

But to understand Hugh Selwyn Mauberley it is also important to understand Pound’s love for taking up personae – this was the title he gave to his second assemblage of poetry published in 1909. (It’s somewhat amusing that when Pound published *Ripostes* three years later, the page at the starting of the book listing ‘Books by the Same Author’ misprinted the title of *Personae* as ‘Personal’ – try as Pound might, people were intent on taking his poetry personally!) Pound told his friend Viola Baxter that each of the figures dramatised in his poetry was a mask (in other words, a persona – the word is Latin for ‘mask’) through which to ‘give you that part

of me which is most real, most removed from the transient personality'. Like T. S. Eliot's theory of impersonality (put forward in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent') Pound's adoption of personae in his poetry – an idea also strongly indebted to the poetry of Robert Browning – is a way of transmuting personal truths into art.

Pound explained his approach to the dramatic lyric in a letter to his friend William Carlos Williams. For Pound, the dramatic lyric was a matter of 'catch [ing] the character'.

The influential critic F. R. Leavis was one of the first to subject Hugh Selwyn Mauberley to detailed analysis, in his 1932 book *New Bearings* in English Poetry which discussed Pound alongside T. S. Eliot and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Leavis remarked that the poem was 'the summing-up of an individual life' but also reflects the 'miscellaneousness of modern culture' and 'the absence of direction'; another important theme in Mauberley, for Leavis, is 'the uncongeniality of the modern world to the artist'. The poem also hammers home just how exhausted the older, Romantic mode of English poetry had become by the early twentieth century. Poetry needed to be revitalised and rejuvenated, but nobody – not even Pound – was clear about what needed to be done. Leavis also observed that Hugh Selwyn Mauberley is a great autobiographical poem, but with the impersonality that we find in great art.

This is, then, how we might approach an analysis of Pound's poem. It is personal yet impersonal; 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' both is and is not Pound himself; the poem rejects one mode of English poetry as moribund, but is aware that the new mode – whatever form it might take – is powerless to be born. One question to ask ourselves of this poem is : what is the relationship between form and subject matter, between the way Pound has written the poem and what the poem is about? If the poem is partly about how the Romantic age of poetry is exhausted, then how would the impersonality of the poem, and the quatrain form it utilises in various ways, help to reflect this?

On the issue of Pound's use of a persona here – the figure of Mauberley – we might also ask : how far is the poem an indictment of society and how far is it also sending up its protagonist? Mauberley is attacking the cheapened philistine consumerism of the modern age, but are we also being invited to laugh at Mauberley? He is an aesthete, a self-conscious poet, out of key with the age in which he lives; we can find ourselves responding sympathetically to such a person but we can also find him laughable and a bit ridiculous. How seriously should we take Mauberley, or Pound's own self-conscious treatment of poetry? Should we make a clear distinction between Pound's voice and Mauberley's? Pound wrote in a letter of 1922 to Felix Schelling, 'Of course, I'm no more Mauberley than Eliot is Prufrock',

but then Pound wouldn't be the first poet to distance himself from the speaker of one of his poems.

In the last analysis, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* – like many great modernist poems – refuses to be pinned down or to have its paradoxes and contradictions resolved in a neat or glib way. It was Ezra Pound's 'farewell to London' but also a poem of transition, between the old Pound of the war years and the new Pound who would spend much of the rest of this life writing his vast modern epic, *The Cantos*. But that really is another story.

Ezra Pound

UNIT-IV

HENRY IV (PIRANDELLO) SUMMARY

STRUCTURE

This chapter shall cover the following main points:

- Introduction
- The Waste Land
- Summary
- Key Words
- Answers to Check Your Progress
- Review Questions
- Further Readings

INTRODUCTION

Henry IV is a man who went mad after being knocked off his horse during a masquerade. At the time he was playing the part of Henry IV, and his delusion for over twelve years after the fall was that he was King Henry IV of Germany during the eleventh century. He has been placed in a "castle" with four valets, or "private counselors", all paid for by his nephew Di Nolli.

The play opens in the throne room with Berthold, a new valet who has just been hired, learning from the other three valets. Berthold is being taught everything he needs to know in order to work for Henry IV and take care of the madman. There are two portraits next to the throne, pictures of Henry IV and the Marchioness Matilda (known as Donna Matilda). The pictures were done during the masquerade nearly twenty years earlier while Henry IV and Donna Matilda were dressed in their costumes.

Donna Matilda, her daughter Frida, Frida's fiance Di Nolli (who is also Henry IV's nephew), Donna Matilda's lover Belcredi, and a Doctor for psychotherapy all arrive at the castle. They are there in the hopes of curing Henry IV of his madness. Soon after their arrival the valets convince Donna Matilda, the Doctor, and Belcredi that it would be a good idea to visit Henry IV. They dress up in costumes and meet him. Henry speaks to them, but as

far as they are concerned he is mad and so they do not pay attention to anything he says.

After the meeting with Henry IV, Donna Matilda is convinced that he recognized her. Both Belcredi and the Doctor try to dissuade her from this notion. Frida and Di Nolli have left to pick up the dress that Donna Matilda is seen wearing in the portrait, and they arrive soon thereafter. Frida enters wearing the dress; she looks identical to her mother's portrait.

Donna Matilda and the Doctor re-enter Henry's room in order to placate him and make him act calmer. After they leave, Henry turns to his valets and tells them that he is tired of acting. They look at him in surprise, and are even more shocked when he reveals that he is perfectly lucid. Henry has been playing the part of the madman for over eight years, having woken out of his madness after twelve years. He and the valets sit around a table and Henry tells them about what it means to be mad, claiming that madmen always speak the truth.

Meanwhile, the Doctor has set up a trap in order to shock Henry IV out of his madness. The portraits have been replaced by Frida and Di Nolli, dressed up to look like the Marchioness and Henry IV. Henry leaves his valets and starts to walk towards his bedroom, passing through the throne room on the way. Frida calls out to him, but she soon becomes frightened and starts to scream. The Doctor, Belcredi, and Donna Matilda all rush in to support her.

Henry watches this scene in amazement. Finally Belcredi and Donna Matilda tell Frida that Henry is cured, and that he has only been acting. It turns out that the valets came to them and confided everything that Henry had secretly told them. Henry explains that after waking up twelve years after the accident, he realized that he was more comfortable playing Henry IV than dealing with changes in the outer world. He therefore pretended to be Henry IV for over eight years.

Henry then discusses the variable nature of reality with them. He explains that since he is aware what mask he is wearing, that of Henry IV, and since he is also aware that other people also wear masks, he is not mad. He explains that madness is when someone wears a mask but is not aware of it. Belcredi comments that according to Henry IV, they are all mad.

After discussing the differences between his reality in which time has stopped and their reality in which it has not, Henry IV goes over to Frida and grabs hold of her. He starts laughing like a madman while hugging her. When the others try to free her, he orders his valets to restrain them. Only Belcredi is able to break free. Belcredi lunges forward, but Henry pulls out his sword and stabs him. In shock, the others carry Belcredi offstage where

a loud cry from Donna Matilda indicates that he has died. Henry gather his valets around him and comments that they will now have to stay in the castle forever.

HENRY IV (PIRANDELLO) CHARACTER LIST

Henry IV

The main sufferer, he lives in a castle and has been assumed to be mad for many years. His delusion was that he was Henry IV of Germany, back in the eleventh century. After waking out of his madness, he decided to keep playing the role.

The Marchioness Matilda Spina

Also known as Donna Matilda, an older woman now, she used to be Henry IV's old flame, the woman he loved.

Frida

The daughter of the Marchioness Matilda Spina, she looks exactly like her mother did at her age. Henry IV feigns madness at the end and tries to kidnap her.

Charles Di Nolli

The young Marquis, engaged to marry Frida. He is the man who has been funding the counselors and the villa so that Henry IV is comfortable in his madness.

Baron Tito Belcredi

The current lover of the Marchioness Matilda Spina, he may be the person that stuck Henry IV's horse, thereby causing the fall that made Henry go mad. He is stabbed by Henry at the end of the play.

Doctor Dionysius Genoni

A physician who has gone along with the group in order to cure Henry IV; his plots instead almost end up making Henry IV go mad for real.

Harold (Frank)

One of the valets or private counselors to Henry IV. As a counselor, he pretends to serve Henry IV and helps the guests assume the proper parts in order to maintain the pretense.

Landolph (Lolo)

One of the valets or private counselors to Henry IV. As a counselor, he pretends to serve Henry IV and helps the guests assume the proper parts in order to maintain the pretense.

Ordulph (Momo)

One of the valets or private counselors to Henry IV. As a counselor, he pretends to serve Henry IV and helps the guests assume the proper parts in order to maintain the pretense.

Berthold (Fino)

One of the valets or private counselors to Henry IV, he is a new actor who has just been hired. As a counselor, he pretends to serve Henry IV and helps the guests assume their proper parts in order to maintain the pretense.

John

An old waiter who firmly believes the Henry IV is mad, the four valets and Henry IV allow him to continue believing that Henry is mad even after we learn that he is lucid.

Henry IV (Pirandello) Summary and Analysis of Act I

Buy Study Guide

Act One

Berthold has been newly hired to work as a counselor for Henry IV, a man who has gone mad and believes that he is Henry IV of Germany back in the 11th century. The other three counselors show Berthold around the throne room and make fun of his ignorance. It turns out that Berthold studied his history on the wrong Henry IV, but the others tell him it does not matter because they themselves are not always sure of their roles. They promise to help him learn the proper material in order to play his role better.

Harold points to the pictures of Henry IV and the Marchioness and asks Berthold if he knows who they are. Berthold is surprised to see the two modern painting in the middle of all the antiquity, and inquires about them. Landolph informs him that Henry IV pretends that the paintings are mirrors. A little frightened by the concept, Berthold worries that he might go mad if he stays and works in the castle.

Soon John enters, a man in twentieth century clothes, and informs them that the Marchioness has arrived along with several gentlemen and her daughter Frida. The other gentlemen turn out to be Belcredi, her current lover, Charles Di Nolli, her daughter's fiance, and a Dr. Genoni who does psychoanalysis.

They arrive in the throne room and Donna Matilda immediately spots the painting on herself. She is astonished that the painting, done in her youth, looks exactly like her daughter does. Belcredi and the Doctor are not at all astonished that the daughter resembles her mother so much, but the others get mad at Belcredi when he points this out. It turns out that the

painting was given to Henry IV about four years after the accident that made him go mad, as a gift from the Marchioness.

The doctor starts to ask questions about the past in order to better analyze Henry's condition. He learns that Henry IV, Belcredi, and the Marchioness were all taking part in a pageant, dressed up for their parts. As a result, they all had the paintings done while in costume. After Henry IV fell from his horse and went mad, his sister (Di Nolli's mother) requested that Donna Matilda give her picture to him, which she did.

The doctor then starts to learn about what happened at the pageant. Donna Matilda assumed the role of the Marchioness of Tuscany, thereby causing Henry IV to choose his role so as to be near her. He was courting her at the time, but he was so serious that she merely laughed at him when he approached her. Apparently it became a public affair, and the other men present laughed at him as well. Belcredi then informs the doctor that Henry IV used to be the type of man that would let himself go when playing a role, able to forget his real self in the process.

After the accident, where Henry fell from his horse and hit his head, they took him to a villa. As a joke, the other actors continued playing their roles when he woke up. It was only a few moments later that they realized while still wearing their masks that Henry IV was no longer wearing a mask, but playing his role in deadly earnest. Belcredi laughs and points out to them that Di Nolli was only a child at the time, and that he and Donna Matilda have gotten old over the years, whereas Henry IV is permanently fixed in time.

Berthold rushes into the room, surprising them all. He has managed to get Henry IV mad at him, and as a result Harold and Landolph propose that the guests visit Henry IV in order to make him forget about Berthold. They agree, and costumes are soon brought for them. After they get dressed, Henry IV enters and looks at them. He first calls Belcredi "Peter Damiani" and pretends that they are who they are dressed up to be. However, he soon digresses and remarks on the fact that it is much easier to go through life having everything fixed rather than not knowing what will happen. He also comments on the fact that being Henry IV is his reality, whereas they see him as someone pretending to be Henry IV.

After his speech, he starts to act mad and pretends that he is really Henry IV. Historically, Henry IV fought with Pope Gregory VII and was excommunicated, and as a result he was forced to crawl into Rome and beg forgiveness. Henry IV asks to be allowed to meet the Pope. He is further convinced that the Pope is using magic against him, magic that has made him eternally twenty-six years old, the same age as in the portrait. Henry IV therefore begs the doctor and Donna Matilda to intercede with the Pope

on his behalf. He bows grandly and exits, leaving Donna Matilda in a state of tears.

Analysis

Henry IV is a play concerned with the concept of a mask on a face. This concept has many different interpretations and is elaborated on in several ways. Foremost the mask is worn by the sufferer to keep out prying eyes. The mask also serves to fix oneself in time; by choosing an historical character Henry IV is able to live out his life at the same age. The mask also deals with the merger of actor and character, such as when Henry IV took off his mask but still believed he was Henry IV: "I shall never forget that scene - all our masked faces hideous and terrified gazing at him, at that terrible mask on his face, which was no longer a mask, but madness, madness personified."

This quote fits in well with many of Pirandello's beliefs. Donna Matilda is describing the masquerade right after Henry IV woke up, where everyone else is wearing a mask except Henry. Because he is not wearing a mask, he is accused of being mad. What Pirandello is saying is that madmen tell the truth, but it is a truth that no one else wants to hear. Thus, society forces people to wear masks in order to conform. When Henry IV emerges without a mask, he is more terrifying to the others because he finally free of the inhibiting masks that they wear.

One of the themes of this play is the exploration of ways to fixate time. There are three ways shown to fix oneself in time: you can become an actor and identify yourself with history, become a portrait as in the pictures of Henry IV and the Marchioness, or you can go mad. Identifying yourself with history has the advantage that your role in time is pre-ordained. You are thus able to go through life without ever having to make a decision, a desire that Pirandello believes many people have. Becoming a portrait also stops time, "Because a portrait is always there fixed in the twinkling of an eye", as the Doctor explains. The third method is to go mad. By going mad you are able to act any way that you wish, essentially freeing yourself from the constraints of both time and society.

Madness is further appealing because of the idea the consciousness demands coherence and form, both of which are ruined by changing time. It is therefore necessary to be mad in order to be conscious in this sense, because only through madness can you effectively stop time and formulate the necessary coherence and form. Henry IV has clearly done this by creating a role everything fits into a coherent historical period and where events are pre-formed.

Henry's revenge here is that when he wakes up out of his madness, he chooses to continue acting. This forces others to act with him; it his method

of making the others go mad in order to humor him. By drawing people into his own world, Henry is able to exercise absolute power over them. He prefers this to the real world where shifting time means that there is never an absolute moment of control.

The arrival of Berthold is meant to provide the exposition for us. Notice that Berthold is used to call attention to the two large paintings. These paintings represent both the fixed and moving time, fixed in terms of the images they represent, but moving in terms of the fact that the people they represent are now older (notice that Henry IV has died his hair). "[The paintings] are images such as...well- such as a mirror might throw back." Thus the portraits are a way to see yourself caught in time. They make you younger and allow you to deny time. Henry IV is convinced the paintings are a magic trick of the Pope's; he wants to be free from always appearing at the same age.

The question of the real self emerges quite early in this act. Landolph tells Berthold: "We don't any of us know who we are really." He is alluding to the fact that they are all playing other roles, shown through the use of two separate names for each of them. This calls into question the real self, forcing us to realize that they are just as real when acting as counselors or when acting as valets.

Henry IV (Pirandello) Summary and Analysis of Act II

Buy Study Guide

Act Two

Belcredi and the Doctor are engaged in a discussion concerning Henry IV's madness. The Doctor tries to argue that Henry is able to recognize that they are faking their roles, but that his madness makes him believe it is real. Donna Matilda disagrees, claiming that Henry IV clearly recognized her. Both the Doctor and Belcredi argue that it is not possible for him to have been lucid, but she refuses to back down.

The Doctor has planned a risky trick in order to snap Henry IV out of his madness and back into sanity. They are waiting for Di Nolli and Frida to return so that Frida can wear an old dress of her mother's, the same dress that is worn in the portrait. Finally Frida walks in wearing the dress; she is the spitting image of the portrait. Belcredi criticizes the Doctor's plan, which involves making the mother and daughter stand next to each other in similar attire, claiming that it will ruin Henry IV's mind to be so violently pulled out of his delirium.

Landolph arrives and asks them to stand before Henry IV again in order to convince him that the Pope is willing to receive him. Donna Matilda and the Doctor agree and enter Henry's room. Belcredi remains behind and tells Di Nolli that he cannot understand why the psychologists

take degrees in medicine when they never cure anyone. He thinks that a law degree would make more sense. While peaking through the keyhole, Belcredi sees the Doctor and Donna Matilda returning along with Henry IV. He, Frida, and Di Nolti rush out of the room.

Henry enters, continuing a conversation he started in the previous room. He then takes Donna Matilda aside and asks her if she loves her daughter, causing her to become confused about whether he is speaking out of madness or in reality. He further tells her to have her daughter, his wife (she is pretending to be his "wife's" mother), come and visit him at his castle.

Once Donna Matilda and the Doctor leave, Henry IV says, "Buffoons, buffoons! One can play any tune on them!" He turns to his counselors and tells them that he is not mad, but merely pretending to be mad. He calls them by their real names, thereby convincing them that he is completely lucid. Henry argues that society labels certain men "mad" because it cannot bear to hear the truths that madmen tell. The counselors gradually grow used to the fact that he is speaking coherently, and Henry finally asks them why they never stopped to realize that they had the perfect life, the life of living in a pre-ordained dream with foreknowledge of the ending.

John, the old servant, arrives in order to take dictation from Henry. Ordolph wants to play a joke on him, but Henry insists on acting his part because he does not want to disappoint John, who cares deeply about helping him.

Analysis

An interesting feature of this play is that Pirandello speaks out against the Doctor on several occasions. This is probably due to his personal experience with his wife's madness. Belcredi offers us Pirandello's opinion: "I say, I've never understood why they take degrees in medicine." When asks what he means, Belcredi claims that law degrees would be more suitable. He continues by saying that the more the doctors claim they cannot perform miracles, the more people believe in their abilities. The irony is that a miracle is exactly what is needed.

One of the more interesting passages occurs after Donna Matilda and the Doctor leave for the second time. Henry remarks, "And you [the valets] are amazed that I tear off their ridiculous masks now, just as if it wasn't I who had made them mask themselves." He is referring to his ability to not only make the other characters wear masks for him, but also to his sense of being able to peer through all masks. Henry IV states that he is a madman because he is aware of the mask that he wears, whereas everyone else is merely mad because they are not aware of their own masks.

This definition of madmen as men who tell the truth is a continuation of the first act. "Because it's impossible to hear [madmen] speak!" Henry IV is claiming that madmen are labeled mad so that other men can shut them up and not have to listen to them. This is directly related to the fear with which the people present at the masquerade realize that Henry is no longer wearing a mask the way they are. Masks and telling the truth are oppositions; Henry is only able to tell the truth by pretending to be mad.

The action of making the valets get a lamp rather than turn on the electric light is important. "No, it would blind me!" Henry is actually afraid that the electric light would dazzle him by returning him to the real world. He is unequipped to deal with reality, a fact that he later admits as the reason for choosing to feign madness for over eight years. .

Pirandello introduces the concept of the variability of truth in this act. He does this by having John appear. When John the monk arrives, Henry convinces the other valets to pretend everything is "true", when of course it is all fake. This is a form of meta-theater, where they are acting that they are acting for John. The truth thus becomes different for each character on the stage, making it impossible for any one character to know what is real.

Henry IV (Pirandello) Summary and Analysis of Act III

Act Three

The pictures have been removed from the throne room and Frida and Di Nolli have replaced them, with Frida pretending to be the Marchioness and Di Nolli pretending to be Henry IV. Henry IV enters the room, preparing to go to bed. Frida calls out, "Henry!", causing him to become terror-stricken and think that he is really mad. However, Frida's courage soon gives out and she screams that she is frightened, causing the others to run in and help her.

They have been told by the counselors that Henry has been cured. Henry is furious about the deception and the fact that the Doctor's plot nearly drove him mad again. In order to get some revenge on them, he chooses to pretend that Di Nolli and Frida are in fact the characters they are dressed up to be. Belcredi intimates that Henry is again faking it, and finally Henry asks him what he should do now that he is cured. He tries to make Belcredi understand that there is nothing for him to do in the real world since he has lost twenty years of his life by living in the castle.

Henry tells them that after falling from his horse he was really mad for about twelve years. When he woke up, he realized that he knew nothing of the outer world, and that he had lost his love, had his friends deceive him, and been replaced. He accuses some of his former friends of having pricked his horse, thereby causing it to rear and cause his fall. Henry IV then turns

to the Doctor and says that he must be a completely new case for the Doctor to study: a man who chooses to remain mad.

Henry tells them a story about an Irish priest who fell asleep in the sun one day on a park bench. He was dreaming, and when a young boy walked by and brushed his cheek with a flower, the priest woke up, but still looked happy and forgetful of everything around him. Suddenly he straightened up and the look of seriousness returned to his face. Henry then compares his acting the part of Henry IV for all these years with the Irish priest acting his part. He concludes that it is really the other people, such as Belcredi and Donna Matilda, who are mad because they wear a mask everyday but do not realize it.

Henry claims that he is not a madman as they understand madmen, since he can recognize the different realities in which he plays a role. He points to Donna Matilda and tells her that she has lived a different reality from his, and is no longer recognizable in his reality, that of Henry IV. Turning to Frida, Henry informs her that she is part of his reality, that she is his. He takes hold of her and hugs her, laughing like a madman. When the others start to approach him to free Frida, he orders the valets to restrain them. Belcredi breaks free of them and lunges towards Henry, who has drawn his sword. Henry stabs Belcredi, mortally wounding him, and the others carry him offstage. After a sharp cry from Donna Matilda, meant to signify Belcredi's death, Henry gathers the valets around him and tells them, "here we are...together...for ever!"

Analysis

The Doctor's climax and ruse turns out to be unnecessary. However, the ruse does have the effect of almost driving Henry mad again. Immediately thereafter Henry talks about the past. This is his way of making an effort to contain time. His fight at the end is fundamentally an effort to avoid a reality where time is flowing. Seeing Frida is in a sense a miracle because she is "resurrected" for him out of his past. Henry's preference for absolute time makes him seize her at the end; he is essentially seizing frozen time.

When Henry IV kills Belcredi, there is a subtle shift in his behavior. He uses the valets for protection, thereby isolating himself in his masquerade of madness. It is now apparent that the murder of Belcredi will force him to be forever caught in his masquerade of madness.

The story of the Irish priest is important in its relation to the concept of masks on face. Henry is trying to explain that the priest had removed his mask for a second, dreamily staring out into space and smiling. However, once he caught himself he immediately put his mask back on. Henry's point is that he is similar to a priest in that he has chosen his mask and wears it

diligently. The difference lies in the fact that Henry is completely aware of his mask, whereas the priest was not.

The Doctor's ruse again invokes the concept of variable truths. He creates a double image, a young Henry IV and Marchioness and an old Henry IV and Marchioness. Although unaware of it, the Doctor has really done nothing more than create two false realities. Henry elucidates this when he acknowledges that he immediately knew Di Nolli was not Henry IV, because he himself is Henry IV. However, since both he and Donna Matilda have changed due to time, even they are no longer the real representations of the portraits. This again challenges our sense of reality as created in a world where time is flowing. In many ways, Pirandello is saying that a stage reality is more real than the "real" world.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. At what tavern do Falstaff and friends congregate?
 - (a) The Boar's Head
 - (b) The Sow's Ear
 - (c) The Pearl & Swine
 - (d) The Ford of Sevens
2. Where does the final battle of the play take place?
 - (a) Falkirk
 - (b) Yorktown
 - (c) Shrewsbury
 - (d) Shropshire
3. Who was king before Henry IV?
 - (a) Richard III
 - (b) Richard II
 - (c) Henry III
 - (d) Edward III
4. Why does Harry say he is spending so much time with Falstaff?
 - (a) To learn the old man's secrets of thievery
 - (b) To escape his father, whom he hates
 - (c) To trick Hotspur into thinking that he is a drunkard
 - (d) To lower expectations, so that when he chooses to act kingly, he will impress everyone all the more
5. Why does Kate confront Hotspur?

- (a) He has not eaten well, slept well, or made love to her for two weeks
 - (b) He is plotting against her secret lover, Prince Harry
 - (c) He is having an affair with Mistress Quickly
 - (d) He prefers his horses to her
6. How do the Percys justify their rebellion?
- (a) They say that Henry is a cruel and sadistic king
 - (b) They say that Henry has wasted the wealth of England fighting the Saracens
 - (c) They say that Henry attained the throne through witchcraft
 - (d) They say that Henry is ungrateful for the role they played in helping him seize the throne
7. In the battle, what does Falstaff carry in place of a pistol?
- (a) A dagger
 - (b) A skin of wine
 - (c) A purse full of gold to bribe his enemies
 - (d) Nothing
8. Who kills Hotspur?
- (a) Kate
 - (b) Falstaff
 - (c) King Henry
 - (d) Harry
9. Why does Henry decide to execute Worcester?
- (a) He deviously chose not to convey Henry's peace offering to Hotspur
 - (b) He stole Henry's daughter and held her for ransom
 - (c) He is in league with France to overthrow England
 - (d) He is a Saracen
10. Approximately when was the play written?
- (a) 1564
 - (b) 1582
 - (c) 1596
 - (d) 1612
11. What is Glyndwr's nationality?
- (a) Irish
 - (b) Welsh

- (c) Scottish
 - (d) Saxon
12. What is the Douglas's nationality?
- (a) English
 - (b) Welsh
 - (c) French
 - (d) Scottish
13. To what family does Hotspur belong?
- (a) Percy
 - (b) Woodville
 - (c) Lancaster
 - (d) Plantagenet
14. Who is John of Lancaster?
- (a) Harry's older brother
 - (b) Harry's brother-in-law
 - (c) Harry's younger brother
 - (d) Harry's nephew
15. With whom does Harry trick Falstaff during the robbery?
- (a) Hotspur
 - (b) Poins
 - (c) Bardolph
 - (d) Gadshill
16. Where did Gadshill get his name?
- (a) From a church
 - (b) From a theater poster
 - (c) From the queen herself
 - (d) From a place where he has staged many robberies
17. How does Falstaff survive the battle?
- (b) By fighting fiercely
 - (b) By playing dead
 - (c) By hiding underwater
 - (d) By fleeing to France
18. What is Falstaff's favorite literary device?
- (a) The mixed metaphor

- (b) The metonym
 - (c) The pun
 - (d) Prosopopoeia
19. What is Falstaff's first name?
- (a) John
 - (b) James
 - (c) Joseph
 - (d) Jasper
20. Which captive does Hotspur wish to have released?
- (a) Bolingbroke
 - (b) York
 - (c) Edmund of Norville
 - (d) Mortimer
21. How does the Archbishop of York feel about the king?
- (a) He loves him as a brother
 - (b) He tolerates him, but only because Henry's reign is so profitable to the church
 - (c) He pretends to love him while secretly hoping for the rebels to defeat him
 - (d) He is an active participant in the rebellion against the king
22. Why does Hotspur's father say he will not go to battle?
- (a) It cannot be won
 - (b) He is too sick
 - (c) He is wracked with grief over his wife's suicide
 - (d) He has recently discovered that Henry is his cousin
23. How did Henry obtain the crown?
- (a) He inherited it from his father
 - (b) He won it in a jousting tournament
 - (c) He took it in a revolution
 - (d) He was given it by the Archbishop of Canterbury after the death of Lord Hastings
24. Which of the following traits do Harry and Hotspur have in common?
- (a) Age
 - (b) Love for Kate
 - (c) Quick temper

(d) Sexual promiscuity

25. Who kills Falstaff?

(a) Harry

(b) Hotspur

(c) The Douglas

(d) Falstaff does not die in the play

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणिः पश्यन्तु माकष्टिद् दुःख भाग्भवेत् ॥

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION



Swami Vivekanand

SUBHARTI UNIVERSITY

Subhartipuram, NH-58, Delhi-Haridwar Bypass Road,
Meerut, Uttar Pradesh 250005

Phone : 0121-243 9043

Website : www.subhartidde.com, E-mail : ddesvsu@gmail.com