

BARBARA MALINOWSKA
University of Łódź

EX ORIENTE LUX - ELIOT'S IMAGERY IN HIS MAJOR WORKS IN THE LIGHT
OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

Motto: A man's theory of poetry
is not independent of his
view of life in general.
--T.S.Eliot, The Use of Po-
etry and the Use of Criticism

The general sense of crisis of values and truths resulting from the dynamic technical progress finds its reflection in the pessimistic visions modern philosophers and writers present in their works. However, to present merely the emptiness of human life is not the sole aim of a literary man. The writer feels bound to present a substitute for the values that have been lost. One of the solutions is to find some 'remedial' values in the worship of old gods or a simple primitivism.

This way was especially popular as it led to the discovery of and enthusiasm for the Hindu philosophy praised by Schopenhauer. René Lorain in his preface to The Imitation of Buddha wrote:

Bored with too much intellectual effort, melancholic sons of declining race, disillusioned in their dreams, and still yearning, we turn our mind toward remote lands of our ancestors.

India as a source for the European culture was also popularized by Indian Philology. Müller's study on Veda stated that all the European cultures descended from the Arian race. In India What Can It Teach Us, he said:

India... is not a remote, exceptional and strange country. India belongs to the European future, it has its place in

its history and life and at the same time it gained its position in the history of human mind²

Simultaneous development of research on animism /E.Tylor's basis for the anthropological theory of culture/ and later studies of J.Frazer provided a natural scientific context and a spiritual basis for the Indian sensualism, pantheism and the theories concerning the role of myth in the poetic imagination.

In literature Orientalism, and Indianism in particular, found its reflection chiefly as a phenomenon /stylistic, linguistic and psychological/ resulting from the assimilation or imitation of the Indian patterns either as a local setting/ the exotic elements in literature/ or as the philosophical ideas expressed by the imagery. This phenomenon helped to solve the three main cultural problems: 1. the definition of a multiple conditioning of man. 2. the problem of a human temporariness and the dependence of man on history 3. the question of finding a way out of an existential fear and despair. The key to solve these problems is an active unconsciousness explored by Yogas.³

Bearing all the above mentioned views in mind I put as the aim of this paper the analysis of the key images of some of T.S.Eliot's major works, i.e the images of Light, Darkness, Wheel and Time which form the chief pillars for the poet's philosophy. Further step will be referring their meaning to some principles of the Hindu philosophy. As the paper will show the imagistic range of the analyzed works is based on these three main images. They acquire as various meanings as the contexts in which they appear. They can denote both secular and religious matters. Their meaning in the light of Christian philosophy is pretty well known. Some additional depth may be gained if we analyze them in the light of Indian philosophy. Thus two targets seem to be possible for achieving: the display of the complexity of the modern intellectual poetry and its dependence upon the cultural heritage of the poet and the remedial significance the imagery acquires due to its interpreting in the light of the Hindu philosophy /regarded as one of the sources of the restoration of order in modern life/.

The first of the three was the image of Light and its counterpart, Darkness. In the particular context of Hindu terminology, the word light retains its literal sense, which it indicates in ordinary, daily circumstances: physical light. But it refers at the same time to a certain unusual spiritual experience peculiar to a certain phase of mystic life. The light can have various manifestations, as the imagery of Eliot's works proves. One of its manifestations - Fire also possesses these two aspects. Spiritually it is god - Agni possessing the power of devouring everything. It is a symbol of time and transient life of man. Another manifestation of light, the moon, is, according to Indian belief, a station in metempsychosis of souls. It is the soul's memory and its timeless integration with body. As such the moon appears as a symbol of peace /which is the final advice in The Waste Land/.

Generally, irrespective of the kinds of its manifestation what is, according to the Hindu religion, called light refers to the spiritual experience of the phenomenon. What is conceived metaphysically as existence is imagistically presented as light. Therefore the absolute reality as a matter of immediate experience is certainly light. Existence is called a "luminous reality".

The very first opposition of Light and Darkness is between absolute existence and the phenomenal world. As is clear from what has been said earlier, absolute existence is the same as absolute light, so all phenomenal things are relegated to the region of darkness. The phenomenal world is the world of our ordinary empirical experience, the world of Multiplicity.

This world of Multiplicity is darkness in two different senses. First, it is darkness in the sense that it is in itself nothing and nonexistence. Because of this fundamental nothingness the world and all individual things in the world remain forever in darkness. But there is at the same time a certain respect in which this fundamental darkness turns into an apparent light. The world is light. Otherwise expressed, darkness phenomenally appears as light. This is the first paradox which we run into in our factual encounter with the world of Being.

The empirical world, in so far as it is phenomenally apparent

to our senses must be said to be the region of light. All things in fact loom up out of their original darkness in the dim light of existence. They do exist, and to that extent they are illumined. But theirs is a dim light because it is not the light of their own; it is a borrowed light, a feeble reflection coming from the real source of light. "The whole world becomes apparent by the Light of the Absolute" /Shabastari/⁴ This means that the very darkness of the phenomenal world is a product of light, and that paradoxically enough, the very coming - into - being of the darkness constitutes by itself the birth of the phenomenal light. Light in this context is not a stable thing. It is, on the contrary, the incessant act of the effusion of creative energy from the ultimate source, the Absolute-pure existence. From this ultimate source the light of existence is incessantly being effused in the form of the self-manifestations of the Absolute. From this point of view, the phenomenal things are but determined and limited forms of the single all-comprehensive light of existence. Existence which is observable in this world is but a derivation and reflection of the Light of existence which is the Absolute⁵.

The fact that the phenomenal world is in itself sheer darkness is not apparent to the physical eye. Quite the contrary, man ordinarily and naturally tends to see the phenomenal world as light: nothing else is visible to him. The phenomenal light, because of its being a reflection, is often called "Shadow" /so it is in Eliot's works/. It is a shadow cast by the sun of Reality upon the reflecting surface of nonexistence. The underlying idea is that it is only through the shadow, indirectly, that man can see pure light.

The first thing to be noticed from the above presentation of the Light-Darkness opposition is that everything we perceive in the empirical world has without exception two different ontological aspects: the aspect of absolute reality, and the aspect of individuation or determination. In the first aspect, everything is a self-manifestation of the Absolute; it is the appearance of the Absolute, not "as-such", to be sure, but in a special form peculiar to the locus. In this sense everything is God. In the second aspect, on the contrary, the same thing is considered in

terms of its being something independent and self-subsistent. It is something "other" than the Absolute; it is non-God. From this point of view it is called a "creature" and, philosophically a "possible". The important point is that "individuation" and "determination" -- consequently the thing's being independent and self-subsistent -- are in truth fictitious properties that have no fundamental reality of their own and are imposed upon the human mind.

Such being the case, the true knowledge of things will be gained, only when man /1/ leaves the domain of Multiplicity /which in itself is non-reality and nonthing./2/ betakes himself to the domain of Unity /which is Reality-in-itself, and then /3/ comes back to the domain of Multiplicity and witnesses in every individual thing of this domain the Unity/which is All/as it manifests itself there in its own self-determination. This code especially is contained in the final advice given to man by the imagery of Eliot's Four Quartets.

It seems helpful to the fuller understanding of the Hindu concepts of the Light and Darkness to present also the concept of Man. Man is an individual in the literal sense of the word. He is "one" just as the Absolute is One. Thus in this particular respect there is a certain structural similarity observable between the Absolute and man. For the Absolute is One in its essence, many in its attributes; man is also one in his personal individuality while being many in his properties, actions and functions. The very fact--that man comprises in himself "unity" and "multiplicity" -- enables him to intuit through his own structure the cosmic paradox of Unity qua Unity being Multiplicity and Multiplicity qua Multiplicity being Unity. Man is, in short, the link between light and darkness. The whole cosmic drama of light and darkness is enacted in his mind⁶.

As the above argumentation shows for man to achieve unity with God a certain procedure is needed which may be gained through hard meditating experience. There are, however, instances when the Divine Light takes shape of a 'momentary revelation' by means of Lightning/ one of supplementary images to the image of Light, especially evident in The Waste Land/.According to Veda a light-

ning is Brahman giving revelation of eternal truths to help man in attaining unity with God. Hence, owing to the interpretation following the rules of Indian philosophy the aim of putting the two images, Light and Darkness and all their various manifestations is to present the true character of the sense of order for modern society.

Although all the major works of T.S.Eliot contain imagery depicting the pessimistic spirit of the epoch /variety of images representing 'the waste barren land' together with its inhabitants 'the hollow men'/there are also great numbers of the so-called 'remedial images'. Their aim is to support men in his choice of the particular path of life and prove its rightness. I shall deal with all of them in turn, presenting kinds of associations they can bring about.

Already in the first movement of The Waste Land there is an implication of one of the most productive images in T.S.Eliot's poetry.

... we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight.

The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S.Eliot, The Waste Land, I, 9-10

Here the image of Light has purely 'physical' connotation /sunlight/, though some symbolism /perhaps happiness/ may be associated with it in the above context. Especially so because this image is connected with the season of summer /bringing fertility, life /contrasted with winter /presented here as barren and forgetful-associated with death/. Its opposite 'Darkness, Shadow' appearing in this movement has some spiritual meaning, together with the 'physical' one/a reflection of man's weakness and a need for protection/:

... Only
There is Shadow under this red rock,
/Come in under the shadow of this red rock/,
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;...

I, 24-29

One fact helps to connect the two associations /physical and spiritual/, namely, that these words appear in a phrase quoted from the Bible/Book of Ezekiel/. This fragment shows the situation of modern man knowing only 'a heap of broken images' - at a loss in reality - whom a religious guide comes to aid in building a system. The shadow, darkness seems to stand for man's ignorance of religious matters/the shadow under the red rock/ as well as two kinds of 'shadow' in man's life--shadow at morning striding behind -the dullness, futility of his life and fear of it, and 'shadow at evening rising to meet -- the growing fear of the unknown that comes at night. Thus the image of 'shadow' persistently appearing in each line is to remind man of his need for the strong system as a support. In Christian religion the domain of darkness, sin brings about an immediate need for the light--the expression of the Divine Grace and God's presence. According to what has been said earlier about the Hindu philosophy some additional depth is achieved by referring the images of Light and Shadow to its domain. The shadow thus means not only ignorance but also nothingness and unreality of human life. That is in connection with the last meaning that the image of Light presented in the next lines expressing ecstasy may be interpreted:

... and I knew nothing

Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

I,40-41

In this way the images of Darkness and Light representing the phenomenal world when referred to the Hindu philosophy acquire similar meaning. From the 'universal' significance the images become 'concretized' when applied strictly to human beings. However here we have the 'physical lights' of men-their eyes, presented. They show the attitude of the inhabitants of The Waste Land: cast down, half blind 'each man fixed his eyes before his feet'/I,65/. Thus 'the external' sense of nothingness expressed by the Light and Darkness in the environment becomes 'internalized' exposing the futility of each man in particular.

In the second movement the image acquires a new dimension-artificiality, reflection of a false splendour:

sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting Light upon the table
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
II, 82-84

But, as the light appears in the context of a richly furnished room, the inhabitant of which is preoccupied with her own person, so the image tends to express on the surface the inclination to make the surroundings decorative. It is thus helpful in purely aesthetic way: illuminating and emphasizing the ornamental quality of life. However, the immediate context reveals the artificiality of such a life in which there is neither safety nor communication with others/ 'Speak to me. Why you never speak. Speak. /Thus, although in a different way, the same problem of insignificance of human life is shown through the image of artificial lamplight or candle light.

Whereas "eyes" in the same movement acquire a fairy tale quality of Ariel's song:

Those are pearls that were his eyes
II, 125

Contrasted with the words preceding this Shakespearian quotation:

Do
You know noting? Do you see noting? Do you remember
Nothing?
II, 121-123

in which a series of rhetorical questions expresses the need for reassurance of safety in life. The quasi-answer does not present a solution. Being of a song-like quality it tries to lull the human fear through an escapist vision of transformation of man's physicality into some precious earth-building component /pearls/. The words immediately following it show that the vision is not convincing and is not accepted as a substitute for a system of values. A human being is still in fear of the unknown and expects that the future will bring some guidance:

And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock

upon the door

II, 137-38

In 'The Waste Land' the image of eyes appears to combine the attitude of man to life /fear and uncertainty/ and expectation of spiritual enlightenment /waiting for a knock upon the door/. The need for a system is pressing but the solution is to come later.

The Darkness in this movement is implied by the saying "Goodnight"
Goodnight Bill. Goodnight Lou. Goodnight May. Goodnight
Ta ta. Goodnight. Goodnight.
Goodnight, sweet ladies, goodnight, sweet ladies,
good night, good night

II, 170-72

Repeated so many times it evokes both the feeling of uncertainty and fear and the need for reassurance, which resembles already the meaning of the image of Light. But it also expresses the automatic routine of a human language and a real lack of safety. In 'The Fire Sermon' the idea of darkness is evoked by the illustrative enumeration of human 'relics'— rubbish left after the feast of a night ball. The effect of this illustration is to present a wholesome view of life with its meaninglessness:

The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights...

III, 177-79

The synecdoche, the heaps of various items reminding of their owners. emphasizes the emptiness of human life. Combined with the image of darkness it enlarges the idea of nothingness and unreality of life in general. Later the same image acquires more personal dimension when the picture of a man sitting by the river, fishing, is presented:

While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening

III, 189-90

Here the image of darkness implied by the word 'evening' is combined with the season of forgetfulness, barrenness-winter. Being on the background of a total futility of the city life it implies again the need for remedy and restoration of fertility. Especially so as the activity of a man is 'fishing', i.e. seeking food, nourishment. The cluster of images, the meaning of which is the human waste land, may invoke a desire to interpreting these images, on their deeper level, as the expression of the human phenomenal world. This world, according to both Christian and Hindu religion is only a transitory experience before achieving the Absolute. But the meaning of life for Christianity is not negated whereas in Hindu religion the phenomenal world is a nothing and unreality. Every human being should wish to attain Brahman, the unity with the absolute, the real Light.

The image of the shining Moon is also connected with the idea of light:

O the moon shone bright on Mrs.Porter
III, 199

The moon here on the surface level belongs to the physical light of the mundane existence. It is also, in its very nature, connected with a feminine quality in life. On the deeper level still, being the reflection of the sunlight, it appears to suggest the Platonic idea of life on earth as the reflection of Reality. All these levels of meaning combined seem to throw some light on Eliot's idea of restoring fertility to the waste land through the feminine quality /Mrs.Porter and her daughter/, but as this quality is connected with the image of Moon-the reflection of reality-it seems still not the remedy man is waiting for. In this movement the two analyzed images--Light and Darkness together with the supplementary to the image of Light the image of Eyes that 'Turn upward from the desk'/III, 216/ have a human dimension, reflecting the idea of life in the unreal city and expressing the wish for restoration of fertility.

Only in the last movement, 'What the Thunder said', all these images combine. Their immediate and deep meanings accumulate. Together with the image of Thunder/'without rain'/ and Lightning /'In a flash of lightning'/ they produce the remedial effect of

restoring order /under the disguise of fertility/. This order finds its expression in three words of Hindu advice:

Datta /Give/. Dayadhvam /Sympathise/. Demyata /Control/, which seems to fulfill the condition of man's return to the phenomenal world, the world of Multiplicity, and seeking the domain of Unity in every existence. The final envoi of the poem, expressed by the formal ending to an Upanishad: 'Shantih' may serve as the message for man. It reassures him of coming of 'The peace which passeth understanding', i.e. the state of the Absolute, Brahman which every human soul attempts to achieve.

In The Hollow Men images of Eyes and Stars as the replacements for the image of Light provide the only evidence of life in 'death's dream Kingdom.' The eyes belong to 'Those who have crossed to death's other kingdom' /The Hollow Men, p.83/.

They are:

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom
These do not appear.
There the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column

p.83

The first association is with the physical light, the representation of the hollow men's life and their emptiness /therefore 'direct eyes', staring/. However, their meaning changes as they are divided into two kinds of 'eyes'-- those expressing human fear and uncertainty, which are absent in death's dream kingdom and those that seem to represent something spiritual, living after the death of the hollow men. Especially this second association reminds one of the notion of unreality of human values in life as stated by Hindu philosophy. This notion is evoked due to the combination of the image of life after death /appearing eyes/ and to its contrast with the temporariness of the human life/ 'Sunlight on a broken column, The Hollow Men, p.83/. A deadness of the hollow men's land is here also emphasized by 'twinkle of a fading star and by calling it 'The valley of dying stars' /

p.84

Therefore people, spiritually dead are here

Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star

p.85

In this way in The Hollow Men the image of eyes replaces the image of light. This fact results in enriching the meaning of the association by adding a kind of personal touch, a human dimension to the notion of light, both physical and spiritual. However, at the end, the eyes 'get universalized' into the image of Star standing for the eternal value guiding man through his life. It is in concord with the tradition of Romantic poetry. It also, as has been said earlier, may stand for the phase of seeking the domain of Eternal Unity and attempting to bring order into the phenomenal world. In this case the final connotation of 'reappearing eyes' brings about a slightly optimistic concept of the fate of the hollow men.

In Sweeney Agonistes the imagery is rather poor. We encounter some reminiscence of the changing images of Light and Darkness in the song by Klipstein, and Krumpacker, Snow and Swartz:

And the morning

And the evening

And noontide

And night

Morning

Evening

Noontide

Night

Sweeney Agonistes, p.123

This sequence is also connected with another recurrent image of Eliot's poetry--the image of the Wheel and Motion with which I shall deal later. The reappearance of these images in turn in a seasonal sequence may be interpreted first as reflecting the change of the physical light and darkness, which determines man's activities. This association is in accord with the whole message of Sweeney Agonistes, describing man's daily routine. As the images do not contain any additional specification of the context they can stand for the automatism and dullness of the life on

earth. This fact may lead further on to the conclusion in the spirit of Hindu philosophy, i.e. to the assumption that the earthly life is a nothing due to its lack of the Absolute. Only the image of Darkness gets developed in the final chorus, with the association of the human fear of the unknown:

When you re alone in the middle of the night and
you wake in a sweat and a hell of a fright ...

p.125

... it's damp and it's dawn and it's dark

p.126

The final association proves once again that the mundane life is not only futile because of lack of order but also unstable and uncertain due to the lack of any kind of a spiritual support. As it is evident from the meaning of the analyzed images the final envoi of 'Sweeney Agonistes' is pessimistic.

The fourth work, The Rock is written mainly as a sequence of choric speeches. It may be treated as the expression of the common outlook shared by the whole humanity. Especially that it shares the idea of the waste land where no communication between people is possible.

In the first chorus the invocation is particularly rich in imagistic emblems of the universe in which the image of Light represented by the Stars is used/they are called 'configured stars' here/. The same image is employed in the third chorus:

Dividing the stars into common and preferred

p.155, The Rock

In this context the light acquires an artificial dimension, it is 'a thing' through which man's activities are shown—it can be divided. However, the division of the stars may imply as well the fact that men tend to be superstitious—'the preferred' stars may be regarded as the supervisors of human lives. This factor seems to suggest the need for religion as the superstitions are the substitutes for the religion.

The fifth chorus also mentions the image of Light. However, here it sets the atmosphere of the parable. It also provides a contrast--indiferent nature vs Evil pictured as the snakes:

... snakes
that lie on mouldering stairs, content in the sunlight
p.158

Only in the speech of the seventh chorus the Light acquires the meaning of religion and its opposite, darkness refers to irreligion:

They followed the light and the shadow, and the light
led them forward
to light and the shadow led them to darkness
And men who turned towards the light and were known of
the light
Invented the Higher Religions; and the Higher Religions
were good
And led men from light to light, to knowledge of Good
and Evil
But their light was ever surrounded and shot with
darkness

p.160

In the ninth chorus the Light is strictly associated with God's glory and power. It is a kind of 'pulsating' image serving as a guide for the life of man visibly presented as the Temple:

Now you shall see the Temple completed;
After much striving, after many obstacles;
For the work of creation is never without travail;
The formed stone, the visible crucifix,
The dressed altar, the lifting light
Light
Light
The visible reminder of Invisible Light

p.165

In these two fragments as anywhere else in T.S.Eliot's poetry the multilayer structure of the variety of associations is evident. As the imagery clearly suggests the need for a system is fulfilled. It refers, obviously, at the first level to Christian religion /the historical factors seem to confirm it as 'The Rock' was written in commemoration of the building of the church/.

However, instead of saying it directly the words "Higher Religions" are used, so the phrase appears to refer to other religions of higher order as well, Buddhism among them. Especially the last one gets its principles stated in this fragment of the choric speech. As it has been said earlier, it is repeated once again that darkness and artificial light stand for the world of Multiplicity which is in itself unreal. The man's aim is to find the world of Unity and after returning to the phenomenal world, to search for unity in multiplicity.

The tenth chorus is a thanksgiving for the completion of the church. Symbolic reminders of evil are followed by lyrical celebration of divine and natural Light in which all forms of light are seen as emblems of the Light Invisible:

And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light
O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great
glory

p.167

The thanksgiving is a point of this work. The church is completed, the work is done. The imagery of Light and Darkness finds its cumulative association with the Light Invisible. This image refers obviously to the Providential Light of God in Christian religion. But the words "darkness reminds us of light" may further suggest, in their deeper level that the phrase refers also more universally to other religions. The more so as it is the principle of Buddhism to return to the world of Darkness /Multiplicity/ and to witness the search for Unity /Light/. In this way Eliot's work provides an advice for man's life. It reminds of the system which can be the spiritual support man needs and warns about the "travail" awaiting for those who want to follow its principles.

Four Quartets, the last work to be dealt with does not enrich the meaning of the image of Light and Darkness. It presents mainly the physical light: 'sunlight', 'stars', 'daylight' with occasional turns to the spiritual:

By a grace of sense, a white light

p.193, Four Quartets

The same case is with Darkness denoting either evil:

Internal darkness, deprivation

p.174

or a physical darkness of

black cloud carries the sun away

p.174

There are also

fancy lights

Risking enchantment

p.179

possessing the deceitful external quality of light /security/ but denoting uncertainty and fear/like darkness/. The context in which the images appear together with the image of Time, Timeless and Motion which shall be dealt with later suggests the variety of forms in the world of Multiplicity. The darkness thus refers to the internal darkness, sin in every man's life and further to the darkness, nothingness, and futility of earthly affairs. I think that only at this point the darkness is associated with Movement and light with Still Point. The meaning of it will be presented when the third image, Motion important for Eliot's philosophy, will be presented.

The two images thus presented, Darkness and Light form the backbone of T.S.Eliot's works. They mostly express inner values/or their lack/as both the physical and the spiritual lights denote some kind of attitude and set the atmosphere in the waste land. Some minor images are used to support their meaning like 'mirror':

... the glass

Help up by standards wrought with fruited vines

The Waste Land, II.77-8

She turns and looks a moment in the glass...

III, 249

or the thunder and the lightning giving messages/What the Thunder said/. The last two images mentioned seem to confirm the

principles of Hindu philosophy describing the cases when man can attain the state of the unity with the Absolute through a momentary revelation. The image of Fire has mainly the 'remedial' significance. It is a fire both of purgation and desire

To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest
burning

The Waste Land, III, 307-10

The purgation from sins suggests some affinities with Christian religion, especially that the fragment contains a quasi-prayer, invocation to God. On the universal level the fire acquires some additional dimension of an element devouring anything ungodly, which is equivalent to some principles of Buddhism. However, it may bring about other associations, too. It may represent 'home':

old timber to new fires ...

Four Quartets, p.177

But, as the context suggests the, 'home' built in this way does not epitomize the notion of security, shelter and comfort. The same is with the next association with this image. A fire, further is the central element of a rustic culture:

Round and round the fire
Leaping through the flames or joined in circles
Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter

p.178

Here the fire has got some features of a pagan ritual/dancing by the fire/. That kind of association with the fire is set deeply within the core of the tradition of the European culture. It also brings about the principles of the Romantic literature finding the truth in the country way of life and customs.

Sometimes the fire symbolically denotes life after death:

* If to be warmed, then I must freeze
And quake in frigid purgatorial fires

p.181

In this context the symbol combines both the sequence and contrast in daily life/freezing associated with a phenomenal world/. This phrase expresses a suggestion that an earthly human existence is only temporary. The notion of temporariness is common to both Christian and Hindu religion. Similar kind of meaning is further on denoted when the two associations of the fire as the referent to the physical and spiritual life attained after an earthly existence, is described:

Water and fire succeed
The town, the pasture and the weed.
Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied.
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.
This is the death of water and fire

p.193

The repetition of the word 'fire' in different contexts suggests that this image gradually acquires the most important association, i.e. that of the spiritual life, after the routine of the existence in the phenomenal world. In this fragment the differentiation in context itself denotes the world of Multiplicity with its many forms. The fire and water seem to represent 'a still point'/very suggestive in the case of the image of Motion/. The two elements constitute 'a system of all consuming, purifying, and life giving elements'/the associations with water and fire in Christian belief are almost the same/. As the elements of contrastive nature seem to be in constant struggle with each other but their aims are the same so the meaning of the symbolism is thus doubled.

The Holy Spirit is also a dove

descending

With flame of incandescent terror

p.197

which reminds of the culturally close association of the image with Christian religion and the Day of Judgement.

Sometimes a new dimension is created when a visual fire and the

invisible fire of Love are combined:

We only live, only suspire

Consumed by either fire or fire

p.196

As with the image of Light, the image of Fire in the final envoi comprises both meanings—of daily and spiritual existence/physical and purifying fire. Thus it provides a counterpart for the image of Light and supplements it with a slightly new meaning/i.e. the acquisition of the state of unity after the devouring, but at the same time giving warmth, and consequently, the sense of security, experience of fire/.

Another equally elaborate image and very significant for orientalism of Eliot's poetry is the image of the Wheel or Motion. This image is particularly important for Eliot's concept of time and the eternal. The Wheel, besides Light and Darkness is one of the pillars on which Eliot's philosophy is based. It reveals the author's meaning in all the analyzed works. As S. Bergsten interprets it the frequent use Eliot makes of the image of the Wheel is not difficult to explain, for it combines the two main aspects of his philosophical and religious view of the world: matter and spirit, the temporal and the eternal. The perpetually moving circumference of the wheel is the material world, which is subject to change and temporal flux; the centre of the wheel, "the still point" is the world of the Absolute, of eternity. Yet the two are related to each other, as God to the world. The spokes possibly symbolize the way of the mystic leading up-or down-to the very hub.

In Indian thought the Wheel of Existence, sometimes also called the Wheel of Rebirth, or Samsara is a very frequently used image. The idea is that every creature undergoes a number of deaths and rebirths until it attains perfection, i.e. when a man has liberated himself not only from all earthly desires, but also from the delusion of the belief that the world of the senses has any real existence. It is then that his true Self becomes one with the Absolute: the Eternal, with Brahman. This is, according to Bergsten, the final object of contemplation, of Yoga. For those who do not attain this ultimate goal, there is no escape from

the cycle of perpetual rebirths, nor is there any hope for them to be born into a world that has made some positive progress since they were last born . This sombre Indian view of history excludes the conception of a Redeemer or a future golden age . The events of history , it seems to affirm , return cyclically ; salvation lies outside history and is achieved only by the individual's attaining to Brahman . Eliot sometimes touches on the cyclic view of history , with the important modification that as Christian he allows for the interpolation of the positive impulse of such events as the Incarnation of Christ in the negative Indian doctrine . Nevertheless the conception of the incarnate god is well-known to Indian religious thinkers , though to them incarnation is not the unique event that is in the Christian doctrine ; for they believe that the same god can descend to earth on several historical occasions .

An essential difference between the Eastern and Western outlooks is indicated by Heinrich Zimmer, quoted in Bergsten's work. For the Western mind, which believes in single, epoch-making, historical events such as, for instance the coming of Christ, or the emergence of certain decisive sets of ideals, or the long development of invention during the course of man's mastery of nature this casual comment of the ageless god/Vishnu/ has a gently minimizing effect. It vetoes conceptions of value that are intrinsic to our estimation of man, his life his destiny and task.

According to this view, the Indian philosophy of history seems irreconcilable with the European, as indeed one would expect, and Eliot can hardly be said to have attempted such a reconciliation. In his view, it seems, the Indian religions form a preparatory stage or an introduction to the full Christian revelation, and although not wholly compatible with the revealed truth, they contain many philosophical elements that can be embraced by a Christian.

In Indian thought, the symbol of the wheel is often used to illustrate the dualism of a philosophical system. The circum-

ference of the Wheel, Samsara is the material or the sensuous world. Its opposite is Brahman. Bergsten says that Coomaraswamy identifies the circumference of the wheel with time and its centre with the timeless. To escape the contradiction between the free will and predestination free will in this philosophy is supposed to be exerted out of time. And in the same way, according to the Catholic doctrine, the perfect freedom of a Christian means his being ruled by God, the Eternal.

The distinction between the motion along the circumference of the wheel Samsara, and the timeless centre, Brahman, is sometimes obscured by the monistic tendencies in Indian philosophy. Coomaraswamy admits that there are two forms of Brahman: Time and the Timeless. Both are aspects of Brahman, are Brahman but the timeless is apprehended only by the mystic in his moment of ecstasy. To most men Brahman is obscured by the veil of temporal existence.

In one of its aspects, Indian philosophy may be regarded as having developed out of mythology and primitive cosmology. Kala, Time, sometimes appears more of a deity than an abstract concept. And some hold that Kala is a substance which emanated from the Absolute at the creation of the Cosmos. This doctrine/ /by the next interpreter quoted by Bergsten, Stanisław Schayer, in Timaens/ supplies another illustration of the tendency to identify time with the created world or to make time a prerequisite of material existence of Brahman itself.

What, after Bergsten, has now been described is not only a static metaphysical pattern made up of logical antithesis resolved in the Absolute, it is also a religious creed involving a theory of man and his salvation. Man's true Self, his Atman/in Indian religion/, is eternal and will in the end become one with Brahman, but as long as man is chained to the Wheel of Rebirth he is not aware of his Self, only his ephemeral, temporal identity. Indian mysticism from the Upanishads to the Yoga of the present day seems to have but one object in life: the penetration into the Self of man, to the timeless which means the end of reincarnation. This penetration can take place at any moment in time; salvation is a perpetual possibility of any his-

rical event.

It is of course extremely difficult to translate Oriental concepts of these things into Occidental language based on different range of thought. Much simplified, and expressed in the language of Western philosophy, the fundamental conceptions Eliot seems to have derived from Indian sources are these: Time and the timeless are related to each other as the world to the Absolute, to God. Material existence means existence in time. The timeless is experienced only in the direct apprehension of the Divine. Though enacted in time, human life aspires to the timeless. To overcome the limitation of temporal existence and become one with God is the object and end of life. Thus expressed, the Indian conceptions of time and the timeless come very close to those of Western, in particular Platonic philosophy.

However, to his imagery based on Indian philosophical concepts Eliot adds one concept, namely, the Point of Intersection of Time with the Timeless which is not consistent with the Platonic doctrine of time and eternity. In the Platonic and Neo-Platonic systems time and the timeless, the Phenomenal and the Absolute, are related to each other as image to archetype, as creation to the Creator. That the soul of man has the innate ability to rise above the temporal existence is true only in a psychic sense: it is a process during which the soul travels from one sphere to the other, while time remains time and is unaffected by eternity.

The idea of intersection of time with the timeless is reflected in The Rock and Four Quartets. It is even sometimes more easily comprehended, intellectually in the form in which it appears in his works. It emphasizes both man's moral responsibility and the intersection of eternity with time which is said to take place at every moment of life. In this secondary sense, the intersection becomes a constantly repeated phenomenon. But primarily it is the unique event in the history of mankind when God, the Eternal descended to earth and endured mortality:

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time, and
of time,

A moment not out of time, but in time, what we call history:

transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time.

A moment in time but time was made throughout moment: for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment gave the meaning.

From the idea of "a moment in time and of time" we can approach the idea hidden under the image of Time. Eliot sets the idea of coexistence of past and future, of beginning and end. This idea is not original, not invented by Eliot.

It goes back to classical Greek and Latin philosophy, and, emerging at intervals throughout the history of Western philosophy, it was subject to renewal and intense discussion during the first decades of the present century. The idea appeared in The Rock and Four Quartets.

As in Indian philosophy the chief aim of the Self, Atman is to achieve Brahman so similarly in Hellenistic religions/which also influence Eliot's imagery/salvation was conceived as a liberation from time, and escape from temporal existence to complete union with a timeless deity. The Apostles and other early Christian teachers, lacking the idea of timeless dimension, thought of salvation as taking place in time—the immortal life of the redeemed soul is eternal only in the sense that it has no end. Ultimately the idea of Redemption depends on a single event in time, the appearance of Christ as the Incarnation of God Himself. The Incarnation divides history into two parts, forms a line of division between the Old and the New Covenant. The Last Judgement does not mean the end of time, only the end of history. The well-known words from the Revelation of St. John /X:6/, "There should be time no longer", can be taken to refer to the end of temporal existence as such, but the word for time /chronos/ in this context as a synonym for the other Greek word for time /kairos/, suggests the interpretation that there should no longer be the opportunity for man to save his soul.

The interpretation of time and the Incarnation in this sense is suggested by the words previously quoted from The Rock/there are similar words in Four Quartets/: these about "the moment of time and in time". To the notion of Incarnation bisecting history

Eliot seems to add the notion of something *trans tempus*, a timeless or eternal dimension. If "transecting" and "bisecting" are not merely meant to reinforce each other, the juxtaposition of these two words forms an illustrative example of the amalgamation in Eliot's thought and poetry of Indian and Christian elements⁷.

The image of the Wheel conveying the notion of time is recurrent in all the works except one, namely, The Waste Land. Here though this image is not mentioned the composition itself with its recurrence of imagery and rhythms reminds of a dance, the circle. As all the imagery serves to depict the world of human existence, the Multiplicity, so does the similarity to the dull dance of the meaningless everyday events. The final envoi, however, provides the counterpart for the moving world—it expresses the wish to reach the Timeless, the still point, the peace.

In The Hollow Men the image takes shape of a nursery rhyme sung while dancing round:

Here we go round the prickly pear
Prickly pear prickly pear
Here we go round the prickly pear
At five o'clock in the morning

The Hollow Men p.85

The first, and immediate association is with the song "Here we go round the mulberry bush". In the context of what follows in 'The Hollow Men' this fragment brings about the association with the world of infancy. This world in itself is a model of well-ordered, safe, and well-protected life under the parental care. But this is not everlasting. Children also have their moments of unhappiness and solitude so the return to the child's world is not a solution for mankind. In a more universal meaning, strictly connected with the image of whirling movement, the motion epitomizes the nonsensical circle of everlasting procedure of human life.

In 'Sweeney Agonistes,' the nonsense of the infantile world is further expanded into the dull routine of a human existence as a whole:

You'd be bored.

Birth, and copulation, and death.

That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks;

Birth, and copulation, and death.

Sweeney Agonistes, p.122

No wonder that the existence just presented could not provide any sense of security for a human being. Therefore it is obvious that the conclusion of the work conveys the expression of fear and uncertainty, which is evident in the final chorus. In the same work, as I suggested earlier, the two images of Light and Motion got combined in the description of the change of seasons. As the light in that fragment refers only to phenomenal light/change of day and night/which is by its very nature sheer darkness so it is comprised within the image of motion, Samsara, also depicting the chain of cyclic events in history.

In the first chorus of The Rock the image acquires more universal dimension denoting the recurrent cycle of the cosmic motion as opposed to the unmoving, still Truth:

The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit,
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying !
The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;

The Rock, I, p.147

In this invocation the affinity with the concept of motion/daily existence/ bringing no real knowledge of the Eternal is clearly stated. Thus depicted a wholesome view of the world prepares the reader to the anticipation of the Truth, stillness to be revealed in the further context. The same cyclic movement of the cosmic spheres finds its equivalent in the organic movement in the life of every man:

In the rhythm of earthly life we tire of light.

Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day and
the night and the
seasons

X, p.167

The imagery in this fragment serves to show a human being as subject to perpetual movement of the seasons, chained to his mundane existence of which he is tired. Therefore, the next fragment expresses the wish to attain the Absolute, God. In this way the Indian concept of the moving Wheel of existence provides a preparatory stage for the introduction of Christian concept of Redemption. The image of the Moment in time is the opposition for the cyclic movement of the seasons:

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time
and of time,

A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call
history, transecting, bisecting the world of time, a
moment in time but not like a moment of time,

A moment in time but time was made through that moment;
for without the meaning there is no time, and that
moment gave the
meaning

VII, p.160

Thus the Indian concept became supplemented with a notion of salvation through the Incarnation of Christ. It provided man with the optimistic prognostics concerning his fate. It gave the meaning to the meaningless existence in the phenomenal world.

All these together, the Wheel and the Moment in Time, find their fullest expression in Four Quartets. At the beginning Time is presented in that poem as a circle:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past

Four Quartets, p.171

This overwhelming notion of time is, of course characteristic of Christian philosophy treating the two worlds as supplementary.

The life of man is to be led from one world to the other. This concept may also be related to Indian philosophy according to which man aspires for the timeless though living in time. The universal circle of time finds its echo in the circulation of blood in human organism and his life which is also reflected in the cosmic spheres. Thus a macrocosmos finds its equivalent in a microcosmos, man:

The brilling wire in the blood
Sings below inveterate scars
Appeasing long forgotten wars.
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars...
Ascend to summer in the tree
We move above the moving tree
In light upon the figured leaf
And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Fursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.
At the still point of the turning world

p.172-3

The microcosmos expresses the same desire as the macrocosmos, i. e. to find peace. The phrase 'still point of the turning world' brings about the implication of the need for a system introducing order to a human life. From the context given formerly, this kind of support may be found in Christianity. If we want to expend the meaning of this association the phrase may be referred to the Indian concept of 'still point', of the world of Brahmen as the opposition to the moving sphere of an earthly existence and the aspiration of man throughout his life in time.

The constant movement of spheres acquires similarity to the dance. Words and music that are associated with dance and singing also undergo the change according to the rules of movement by which they become perpetual:

Words move, music moves

Only in time, but that which is only living

Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach

The stillness

p.175

This fragment relates the quality of movement not only to human life but to man's creativity as well. However, the notion of 'still point' from Hindu philosophy brings the anticipation of a need for a system, order. In the artistic creativity such order may be achieved through form, pattern. In this way the momentary existence of the work of art is given the timeless dimension. The man's aspiration for the timeless is already evident in his works. All the concepts are relegated into the domain of movement with one exception only for love as it may reflect the divine love for mankind:

Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.

p.175

This fragment shows the duality of the concept of love-timely and timeless. The redeeming Love, the spirit of the material world is sometimes available:

For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time

p.190

The notion of "the moment in and out of time" giving the meaning to time comes from Christianity. In this moment the idea of timeless Love becomes realized. It does not exist in Hindu religion. In this way Christianity adds a positive possibility to the negative Hindu concept.

Even though Love is present the very fact does not change a man's lot. Every human being is obliged in his life to deserve this Love:

And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

p.198

In this way the image of the wheel depicts the cyclic history of the world and human life. And the aim of everyman's life is to reach 'the still point', i.e. to achieve the unity with Deity and to return to the world of Multiplicity and witness the traces of Unity in it.

The above analysis has shown the complexity of building various associations in a modern intellectual poetry represented by some works of T.S.Eliot. As I attempted to show, the imagery of the modern poetry turns out to be a whole construction of the variety of meanings. The images grow in associations from those suggested by the immediate context in the work itself to those provided by the heritage of the cultural background, and even those coming from more universal concepts distantly reminding of different philosophical systems.

As the various contexts suggest the three main images--Light, Darkness and Motion acquire gradually various meanings. It is characteristic, however, that the two images combined, Darkness and Light denote the physical life of man and its ephemeral feature. The existence of these two images immediately suggests the need for building a system following some philosophical principles. For an European the first level of associations with these two images clearly points out to Christianity as a possible origin of such a system. However, some concepts suggest also universal affinities, with Buddhism.

It is interesting that when the image of Motion is introduced the depth of meaning increases. In earlier works, The Waste Land and The Hollow Men the image of Motion depicts only the nonsense and dull routine of an earthly life. In 'Sweeney Agonistes' this image is supported by the image of Light. But the context does not change. So the association with the dullness and nonsense of the world of Multiplicity, in which man awaits his future with fear, remains.

In the two later works, 'The Rock' and 'Four Quartets' the image of Motion gets expanded in meaning. In 'The Rock' Eliot introduces the image of 'The moment in time and of time' providing the opposition for the moving circle of existence. The association with this image is that of Christ's redemption of humanity, thus it enriches the meaning of the imagery connected with Hindu philosophy. In the last work analyzed here, the image of Motion is given its counterpart in the image of Still Point. It is interesting to note that the notions of Love and spiritual Light are associated in this poem with the image of Still Point. In this way T.S.Eliot universalizes his concept of order giving religious system referring it both to Christianity and Buddhism. The three notions, represented by the key images of Light, Darkness and the Wheel, mutually combined and filtered through the idea of "a Moment in Time" are able to provide an insightful solution for the waste land.

NOTES

- 1 J.Tuczyński, Motywy indyjskie w literaturze polskiej, 1981 p.111
- 2 J.Tuczyński, p.112
- 3 J.Tuczyński, p.91
- 4 Toshihiko Izutsu, The Paradox of Light and Darkness in the Garden of Mystery of Shabastari, in: Anagogic Qualities of Literature, J.Strelka /ed./, p.289
- 5 T.Izutsu, p.293
- 6 T.Izutsu, pp 289-304
- 7 S.Bergsten, Time and Eternity, 1960, pp.70-81

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bergsten, S. Time and Eternity. Lund: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1960
- Eliot, T.S. The Complete Poems and Plays. London: Faber and Faber, 1978
- Newton - De Molina, D./ed./ The Literary Criticism of T.S.Eliot, University of London: The Athlone Press, 1977
- Strelka, J./ed./ Anagogic Qualities of Literature. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971
- Tuczyński, J. Motywy indyjskie w literaturze polskiej, PWN Warszawa, 1981

EX ORIENTE LUX - OBRAZOWANIE ELIOTA W JEGO WAŻNIEJSZYCH PRACACH
W ŚWIETLE FILOZOFII HINDUSKIEJ

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule przedstawiona jest analiza wczesnych utworów T.S.Eliota w świetle filozofii hinduskiej. Obrazy poetyckie - światło-ciemność, ruch-bezruch, moment w czasie - analizowane zgodnie z archetypicznymi znaczeniami ustalonymi w kulturze zachodniej zyskują dodatkową głębię filozoficzno-religijną, gdy rozpatruje się ich znaczenie w kulturze orientalnej. Ponadto zauważyć można prawidłowość, iż znaczenie tych obrazów zmienia się w czasie - obrazowanie nabiera coraz głębszej treści religijnej i może być traktowane jako wyraz proroczej wizji autora ukazującej drogę wyjścia z chaosu współczesnego świata. W najpóźniejszych utworach obrazy poetyckie: światło /religia/ - bezruch /'still point' - zjednoczenie z Najwyższą Istotą/ - moment w czasie /Zbawienie/ upodabniają się znaczeniowo. Tę samą prawidłowość zauważyć można w przypadku obrazów: ciemność/ brak religii, ignorancja religijna/ oraz ruch-wirujące koło /życie doczesne poświęcone jedynie sprawom ziemskim/.