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> I can connect
>
> Nothing with nothing.
>
> The broken fingernails of dirty hands.[1]
>
> – T. S. Eliot

In 1922, Eliot published a poem that was, in Ezra Pound's words, the 'justification of the "movement" of our modern experiment'.[2] With its multiple voices and perspectives, shifting pronouns, personal and historical memories, *The Waste Land* presents the fragmented consciousness of the alienated human mind after the horrors of the First World War. In an attempt to express life, the poem is a portrayal of an internal world that presents neither a coherent nor unified subjectivity; instead, it illustrates a consciousness that takes on distinctive forms, but still remains in continuous flux. *The Waste Land* throws the most relevant light on Eliot's own theory of subjectivity and the perception of reality: that the world only becomes real through the multiple, distinctive and seemingly disjointed perspectives of the individual consciousness.[3] By creating a poetic consciousness, Eliot, like other modernist writers, strives to capture the 'essential thing' and 'truth' of life: the

[1] T. S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land', in *Collected Poems*: *1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 301–03. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
[2] Quoted by A. Walton Litz, 'The Waste Land Fifty Years After', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 2 (1972), 455–71 (p. 456).
[3] Quoted in Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue, *The Poems of T. S. Eliot, Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 559.

continuous flux of fragments that point to a common unconscious desire for death.[4] This paper explores the poet's vision of a post-war human consciousness: its fragmented nature, burden of existence, and search for salvation.

A Fragmented Consciousness

To understand *The Waste Land* is to understand the 'new conceptions of poetic form'[5] that are demanded in the modernist literary period: the need for an artist to search for and express 'a form of life' in their work, particularly in the midst of the chaotic and disoriented post-war world.[6] Characterised as a period of change, innovation, and reconstruction, modernism emphasised an awareness of a present state and the shifting of focus to the human mind. Instead of seeing human consciousness as fixed and stable, modernists recognised its 'process of becoming'. [7] The rise of Bergson's philosophy of time and its relation to consciousness as a continuous flow of stream shone light on a new perception of reality.

For Eliot, the need to address 'new objects, new groups of objects, new feelings, new aspects'[8] in modernism led to his intention to develop a poetry that would introduce 'a more impersonal point of view, or splitting [the poem] up into various personalities' in order to illustrate the disjointed nature of consciousness.[9] Recognising the chaotic, irregular, and fragmentary experience of the ordinary 'modern' person, Eliot's poetry strives to capture this distinctive subjective perspective. Having studied under the British philosopher F. H. Bradley during his graduate studies, Eliot aimed to portray the subjective nature of reality that is embedded in the individual consciousness in *The Waste Land*. Exploring Bradley's theories on the relationship between knowledge and experience, Eliot's doctoral dissertation centred

[4] Virginia Woolf, *Essays on the Self* (Honiton: Notting Hill Editions Ltd, 2014), p. 5.
[5] Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 168.
[6] T. S. Eliot, 'Baudelaire', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), pp. 419–30 (p. 424).
[7] Dayton Kohler, 'Time in the Modern Novel', *College English*, 10 (1948), 15–24 (p. 17).
[8] T. S. Eliot, 'Swinburne as a Poet', in *Selected Essays*, pp. 323–27 (p. 327).
[9] T. S. Eliot, 'William Blake', in *Selected Essays*, pp. 317–22 (p. 321).

upon this relational perception of reality, arguing that 'the reality of the object does not lie in the object itself, but in the extent of the relations which the object possesses without significant falsification of itself'.[10] Individual consciousness hence plays a crucial role in his notion of reality. Being the 'selection and combination of various presentations to various viewpoints', consciousness, according to Eliot, constructs our external world *in relation* to the objects or subjects perceived.[11] To further illustrate this relational perception of reality, Eliot suggests that a child might be frightened if he sees a shadow that resembles a bear, for in the child's initial perception, the shadow *is* the bear; only in a 'difference of fullness of relations' could the 'real bear and illusory bear' be distinguished.[12] A close examination of the poet's early philosophical ideas is thus essential to an understanding of his theory of subjectivity, which stands at the crux of *The Waste Land*. As Eliot writes:

> the life of a soul does not consist in the contemplation of one consistent world but in the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible ones, and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them.[13]

With its multiple voices and speakers, the poetic consciousness of *The Waste Land* alludes to the human consciousness that represents the 'life of a soul'. It is neither single nor monad. It is constantly moving without settling into a single entity, for it is a plurality of various perceptions. It is composed of fragments that flow and melt into each other continuously, while it constantly seeks to break its own boundary to achieve a realm beyond itself.

The poem opens with an unidentifiable but authoritative voice, one that is observant and distant:

> April is the cruellest month, breeding
>
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

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[10] T. S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 91.
[11] Ibid., p. 142.
[12] Ibid., p. 116.
[13] Ibid., p. 147.

> Memory and desire, stirring
>
> Dull roots with spring rain. (1–4)

Although the speaker's identity is unclear, a scene is set and feelings are conveyed; then, with the introduction of a new pronoun, the reader is taken to a different perspective in the next lines:

> Winter kept us warm, covering
>
> Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
>
> A little life with dried tubers. (5–7)

Like a film, the scene zooms from the plain waste land to the underground. Shifting the view, the preceding voice fades and takes on the poetic consciousness of objects that are buried: the 'dull roots', the dormant 'memory', and 'desire' that threaten to break forth.

The same syntactic structure of present participles persists, showing signs of continuity; yet the assumption of a consistent speaker is immediately challenged in the lines that follow, despite the usage of the same pronoun 'us':

> Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
>
> With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
>
> And went on in the sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
>
> And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
>
> Bin gar deine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch. (8–12)

The scene presented is no longer a natural landscape, but an urban setting of a colonnade, suggesting that a new subject-matter has emerged: the poetic voice now belongs to a particular memory of an encounter, as signified by the usage of past tense. The earlier structural pattern of present participles disappears, and is replaced by sentences that begin with verbs in conjunction: 'And went […] | And drank […], and talked'. Then, without warning, a childhood memory emerges: although the pronoun 'we' is retained, it is obvious that 'we' are no longer the ones drinking coffee in the Hofgarten:

> And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,

> My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
> And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
> Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
> In the mountains, there you feel free.
> I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter. (13–18)

A first personal pronoun is presented, and the poem now shifts to a personal reminiscence of Marie's. Consistency is again disrupted, however, as the second stanza opens with aggression and a change of pace and scenery: 'What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow | Out of this stony rubbish?' (19–20) With the clutching 'roots', sun beating on a 'dead tree' and 'dry stone', the poem brings back the opening scenery of the 'dead land', evoking the similar desperate sentiments of the unwillingness to grow; it is the scenery of the waste land, which despite taking on different forms, constantly resides in the poetic unconscious.

The poetic consciousness continues throughout the poem by depicting fragmented scenes with various characters: Madame Sosostris' card-dealing, the pub scene of working-class women, the meeting of the typist and clerk, the anticipation of rain from the thunder, to name a few. While these fragments seem disconnected, they all come together in Tiresias: 'I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives […] | Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest' (218–29). Eliot's note further provides a strong suggestion that the fragments all originate from the same flow of consciousness:

> Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character', is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias.[14]

While Tiresias is the persona of the unity of voices, it would be erroneous to assume that he is the protagonist of the poem, or that his voice is the one underlying all the other poetic voices. As suggested in Eliot's note, Tiresias is identified as a 'spectator' rather than a

[14] T. S. Eliot, 'Notes on the Waste Land', in *Collected Poems*, p. 82.

'character': standing at a distance, Tiresias is an observer who merely '[p]erceive[s] the scene' that flows around him without being directly involved in any of the fragments. There is no indication of Tiresias' attempting to combine the polyphonous voices to form an 'inclusive human consciousness',[15] nor is there a resulting 'tragedy of unreconciled voices' due to a failure to do so on his part.[16] Having 'foretold the rest' and 'foresuffered all', he is 'an intermittent phenomenon' that emerges 'out of other characters'.[17] He is not to be mistaken for the speaker of all speech and all consciousness in the poem — instead, he is *composed of* the plurality of voices. The various voices establish a co-existence in him: they are neither coherent nor contradictory, but are engaged in a continuous flow that reside in Tiresias. In Eliot's words, they are 'not wholly distinct'; they are able to 'melt into' each other, for behind each and every one of the fragmented voices looms the consciousness of suffering and its desire for death.

The Burden of Existence

In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Eliot asserts that any new work of art can only gain its meaning in relation to the past, to the works of the 'dead poets and artists' that preceded it, for appreciation and creation originates 'among the dead'.[18] Eliot's essay was published in 1919, coinciding with Freud's writing of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which his theory of a repetitive compulsion of the death instinct is explored. A few years later, *The Waste Land* was published in 1922. Confronted with the unprecedented death toll of the Great War, both Eliot and Freud sought to understand human nature in a different light — the light of death.

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[15] F. R. Leavis, 'The Waste Land', reprinted in *T. S. Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Hugh Kenner (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 89–103 (p. 92).
[16] Matthew Hart, 'Visible Poet: T. S. Eliot and Modernist Studies', *American Literary History*, 19 (2007), 174–89 (p. 184).
[17] Levenson, p. 191.
[18] T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 37–44 (p. 38).

Eliot's assertion that a conscious present is 'an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show' implies the significance of revisiting the past, in particular, its persistence in the present.[19] Eliot echoes Freud's theory of an inherent death-drive when he writes of the need to 'seek to achieve an old goal by new means as well as old', to 'restore a prior state' where 'the inanimate existed before the animate'.[20] Freud contends that 'the goal of all life is death', that subjects suffering from trauma tend to engage in a repetitive compulsion to relive and preserve their traumatic events so to gain a more active control.[21] The unconscious death-drive also suggests an explanation for aggression, self-destructiveness, and individual suffering, and generally underlies the problems of human civilization. Quoting from Schiller's dire tragedy, Freud states that this intrinsic desire is necessary for humankind to 'bear the heavy burden of existence'.[22] It is also this internal motivation for destruction that weaves through the multiple perspectives of the poetic consciousness in *The Waste Land*. While the absence of a main speaker renders the poem 'a heap of broken images', Eliot reminds us that the voices are 'not wholly distinct': in their poetic undertone lies the haunting desire of death, for each 'melts into' another in a 'ritual of [the poem's] destruction'.[23]

However, a closer look at this land of 'waste' and 'dust' which consists of merely 'dry stone' and 'dead tree' reveals clear signs of life: those of a living dead. Consider the first seven lines of the poem:

> April is the cruellest month, breeding
>
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
>
> Memory and desire, stirring
>
> Dull roots with spring rain.

[19] Ibid., p. 39.
[20] Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', p. 39.
[21] Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Penguin Freud Reader*, ed. by Adam Phillips (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 132–95 (p. 166).
[22] Ibid., p. 173.
[23] Maud Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 109.

> Winter kept us warm, covering
>
> Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
>
> A little life with dried tubers. (1–7)

It is evident that spring's forcefulness to squeeze life out of a 'dead land' — of the buried — is unwelcome. Its attempt to breed, mix, and stir life creates a resentful sentiment in the dead: when buried in 'forgetful snow' back in winter, a season when life either ceases or is held in suspense, there is a sense of warmth, safety, and relief. Yet with the arrival of life in spring, disturbance is brought to the wintry, quiet inertia of death. Contrary to the assumption of a survival instinct, new life is dreaded in the waste land; instead, there is a yearning to procure an existence in death:

> 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
>
> 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
>
> 'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?' (71–73)

Eliot has painted a literal dead land, one in which 'new growth will sprout from the fertile body of a corpse'.[24] With the many 'undone' souls and crowds of corpses which 'flowed over London Bridge', the waste land breeds death and makes it 'bloom'. As Levenson has pointed out, it is ironic to title the first section as 'The Burial of the Dead', for evidently, 'these buried are not yet dead'.[25] Retaining life in its burial, the consciousness of the poem hence belongs to the living dead. April is seen as cruel with its spring rain, for the forcefulness of life connotes the tormenting impossibility to ever actualise the strong desire for death. In Eliot's own words, the poetic consciousness is one that has learnt 'not to expect more from *life* than it can give', but instead looks to '*death* for what life cannot give'.[26]

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[24] Eve Sorum, 'Masochistic Modernisms: A Reading of Eliot and Woolf', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 28 (2005), 25–43 (p. 31).
[25] Levenson, p. 172.
[26] Ricks and McCue, '*The Waste Land*: Headnote' in *The Poems of T. S. Eliot, Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems,* pp. 547–86 (p. 576). [emphasis added]

As Freud has posited, the death instinct is unconscious, since it is derived from a repressed wish; likewise, the desire for death and death itself in the poem is disguised. Its face is 'hidden and unrecognisable', [27] though its existence is undoubtedly felt:

> Who is the third who walks always beside you?
>
> When I count, there are only you and I together
>
> But when I look ahead up the white road
>
> There is always another one walking beside you
>
> Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
>
> I do not know whether a man or a woman
>
> —But who is that on the other side of you? (359–65)

Taking the form of a shadow 'wrapt in a brown mantle', the ghost of death is constantly 'gliding', 'striding behind', and 'walking beside' the fragmented consciousness. Its haunting presence resides in the 'decayed hole among the mountains', in the nub of the unconscious of the poetic consciousness. With the same resonance of death, the voices of the buried, the drowned Phoenician Sailor, Madame Sosostris, the couple in the hyacinth garden, and the wind that carries 'away the little dead people' in the draft of *The Waste Land* — to name but a few — all melt from one into the next. Resembling the human unconscious which at times strives to break forth in the form of dreams, the death-undertone of the poem surfaces most apparently in the epigraph. Taken from Petronius, the story of the immortal but ageing Sibyl is a strong allusion to a suffering caused by the burden of existence:

> She hung in a cage, and read her rune
>
> To all the passers-by.
>
> Said the boys, 'What wouldst thou, Sibyl?'
>
> She answered, 'I would die.'[28]

What is haunting about the unconscious death-wish is not death itself, but the imposition of life mingled with the inability to die — the afflictive state of neither 'living nor

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[27] Ellmann, p. 109.

[28] Ricks and McCue, '*The Waste Land*: Commentary', pp. 587–710 (p. 593).

dead', of looking towards 'death for what life cannot give'. In the epigraph of the draft of the poem, Eliot also points to the agony of this in-between stage by quoting from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

> Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision, — he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath —
>
> 'The horror! the horror!'[29]

'The horror' does not refer to a fear of death, but the anguish of a continuous cycle of 'desire, temptation and surrender' without an end to this suffering in sight. It is precisely this 'horror' that is communicated in the fragmented poetic consciousness in *The Waste Land* — the painful perturbation of life and the heavy burden of existence.

The Inward Journey: Surrender of the Self

Drowned in the midst of a rehearsal of its own death, the fragmented poetic consciousness can find no rest. Its continued flux is constantly disrupted by the suffering of its own broken existence, which is further magnified by the denial of its desire of death:

> Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
> There is not even silence in the mountains
> But dry sterile thunder without rain
> There is not even solitude in the mountains
> But red sullen faces sneer and snarl (340–44)

There is no peace, no 'silence' or 'solitude', because there is no one stable and single stream of consciousness; it is a futile search for a coherent and fixed entity. With its fragmented nature, consciousness is isolated from itself and burdened with the desire for death and pain derived from suffering in life. It is the consciousness of a living dead, for '[h]e who was

[29] T. S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land: An Editorial Composite', ed. by Ricks and McCue, in *The Poems of T. S. Eliot,* pp. 321–48 (p. 323).

living is now dead | We who were living are now dying'. The fifth and final part of the poem, 'What the Thunder said', records this breaking-point of pain which results in a desperate cry for salvation — the anxious anticipation of water and rain.

With echoes of the Upanishads in Hindu philosophy, Eliot posits the possibility of liberating the fragmented consciousness from its living death. Instead of striving to achieve a 'triumph of a unified consciousness', as early critics have suggested, he hints at the necessity of its surrender of itself: the fragmented consciousness must come to an awareness of itself, of its own fragments.[30] Only by growing conscious of its individual existence and acquiring a knowledge of being could it submit itself to a wider and bigger universal self: one that lies in the 'depths of the soul' of the Ultimate Reality that is *beyond* temporal existence.[31]

A student of Sanskrit and Buddhism from 1911 to 1913, Eliot was inspired by Hindu philosophy: 'Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages […] and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility.'[32] His direct reference to *Brhadāranyaka Upanishad* in 'What the Thunder Said' — the only section of the poem that hints at the possible arrival of rain on this dry and sterile piece of waste land — suggests that an examination of the Upanishads' religious principles is essential in understanding the three cries of thunder and the path to salvation. Centred upon 'the science of the Self', the Upanishad asserts that all suffering originates from the inevitability of death that arises from human existence. A 'grief of the mind' is brought from within ourselves, hence in order to achieve a 'freedom of the spirit and removal of sorrow' we must come to a deep understanding of our 'being' of the self:

> The knowledge that is of the Upanishad is thus inseparable from the 'being' of the self […]. It is a knowledge of 'being'. It is a Consciousness of Existence which is going to be the freedom of the spirit. It is in this sense, perhaps, that we call the ultimate Reality as *Satchidanānda* — Existence-

[30] Eve Sorum, 'Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and New Subjectivities', in *The Cambridge Companion to The Waste Land,* ed. by Gabrielle McIntire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 162–77 (p. 162).
[31] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads* (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 124.
[32] T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 113.

> Consciousness-Bliss. It is a Consciousness of ultimate Existence which is at once Freedom and Bliss […]. It is a description of Eternity itself where 'being' and 'knowledge of being' become one and the same, where there are no sufferings, obviously.[33]

Radhakrishnan's introduction in *The Principal Upanisads* provides further insights on the concept of *Satchidanānda*, the 'ultimate Reality':

> The Real at the heart of the universe is reflected in the infinite depths of the soul. The Upanisads give in some detail the path of the inner ascent, the inward journey by which the individual souls get at the Ultimate Reality. Truth is within us […]. The goal is […] to identify with the Supreme Consciousness and Freedom.[34]

A distinction must be made between the Upanishad's 'Ultimate Reality', *Satchidanānda*, and the relational perception of reality that is posited in Eliot's dissertation. The former lies in 'Eternity', a realm that exists in a consciousness of 'being' and 'knowledge of being'; it exists 'within us', in the 'infinite depths of the soul'. The latter, on the other hand, is formed by various perceptions *of the external world* in consciousness. Within this relational perspective, reality is subjective. As Eliot writes, 'So far as the experience go, we may be said in a sense to live each in a different world.'[35] As explored, consciousness is hence fragmented with its multiple voices; its isolated nature of a subjective reality causes pain and suffering; and its unfulfilled unconscious death-wish results from a reminder of the inevitability of death.

It is precisely the chasm between these two realities that Eliot hopes to bridge: recognising the crucial need to embark on an 'inward journey', Eliot expresses the importance of self-realization in the fragmented consciousness. Salvation is only possible through transcendence from the relational reality to the Ultimate Reality; in other words, the goal does not lie in unifying the voices into one coherent entity, nor in deciding on one main

[33] 'The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad', ed. by Swami Krishnananda, *The Divine Life Society*, pp. 23, 25–26 <https://www.swami-krishnananda.org/brdup/Brihadaranyaka_Upanishad.pdf > [accessed 15 May 2021].
[34] Radhakrishnan, p. 124.
[35] Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience*, p. 148.

voice that speaks louder than the rest — rather, the fragmented consciousness must reach a 'Consciousness of ultimate Existence' by looking within itself. Instead of rejecting its own fragmentation or attempting to unite its 'heap of broken images', the poetic consciousness must acknowledge, recognise, and finally accept its fragmented and isolated nature. Only then could it attain a new level of consciousness, the 'Supreme Consciousness and Freedom': a consciousness of being conscious so to free itself from suffering.

We may now turn to the voice of the thunder, whose three roars of 'DA' provide significant guidance for the path of the 'inner ascent'. Withholding the rain from the barren land — an allusion to a liberation of suffering — the 'dry sterile thunder' outlines three conditions that the fragmented consciousness must meet in order to acquire a knowledge of its own existence:

> DA
>
> *Datta*: what have we given?
>
> My friend, blood shaking my heart
>
> The awful daring of a moment's surrender
>
> Which an age of prudence can never retract
>
> By this, and this only, we have existed. (400–05)

The first lesson, *datta,* to give, heightens the significance of 'a moment's surrender' — the surrender of the self that 'defines and shapes existence'.[36] This idea calls to mind Eliot's poetic theory on the impersonality of an artist in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent':

> What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.[37]

His concept entails 'both the loss of self and the gain of an omnipotent sense of belonging and control'.[38] Therefore, to acquire a knowledge of 'being', the fragmented consciousness

[36] Sorum, 'Masochistic Modernisms', p. 33.
[37] Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', p. 40.
[38] Sorum, 'Masochistic Modernisms', p. 29.

must surrender its individuality and its fragments; for self-surrender, according to the Upanishads, calls for 'an offering of what you have and what you are […] in the direction of something which you regard as the goal'.[39] Only by giving up its subjectivity could consciousness reach a Consciousness of Existence, for '[b]y this, and this only, we have existed'.

The second teaching from the thunder, *dayadhvam*, illustrates how sympathy — 'some ability to step outside the self' — is necessary in the process of self-transcendence.[40] Eliot's note, with reference to F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, elucidates the fundamental subjective nature of reality in the fragmented consciousness: 'In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it'.[41] Without a recognition of its own existence, consciousness would always be trapped 'in his prison' of alienation and the perpetual cycle of a yearning for death; for a relational perspective of reality would depict a subjective world that is 'peculiar and private' instead of one where everything is connected — the Ultimate Reality. Practising sympathy is the key to the prison, allowing consciousness to realize 'its existence and its relevance to the context to which it is connected'.[42]

The third demand centres upon the need to control, *damyata*:

> DA
>
> *Damyata*: The boat responded
>
> Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
>
> The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
>
> Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
>
> To controlling hands (417–22)

[39] Krishnananda, p. 309.
[40] Sorum, 'Psychology, Psycholoanalysis, and New Subjectivities', p. 173.
[41] Eliot, 'Notes on the Waste Land', p. 86.
[42] Krishnananda, p. 314.

Salvation in Hindu philosophy is obtained through knowledge, as '[h]e who knows anything, controls it; and so, he who knows the supreme truth thereby becomes master of it, and gains the highest state'.[43] Eliot therefore posits that having mastered the first two lessons from the thunder, the fragmented consciousness would then be able to control its fragments. Its chaos would cease, silencing the storm within as '[t]he sea was calm' and its heart 'beating obedient', which resonates with the Upanishad belief that the heart 'is a very subtle connecting link between the individual and the Ultimate Reality'.[44]

It remains unclear whether rain has eventually fallen on the 'arid plain', or if salvation is ever reached in the poem; yet perhaps it was never the poet's intention to give answers. What ought to be noted at the very end of the poem is the process of a fragmented consciousness coming to an awareness of itself:

> *Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina*
>
> *Quando fiam uti chelidon* — O swallow swallow
>
> *Le Prince dAquitaine à la tour abolie*
>
> These fragments I have shored against my ruins
>
> Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
>
> Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
>
> Shantih shantih shantih (427–33)

Playing out a symphony — or perhaps cacophony — of one-line allusions to Dante's *Purgatorio*, Philomela's myth, *El Desdichado*, and Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, the poetic consciousness seems to be intentionally showcasing its own fragments. Instead of seeking to 'reconcile the inner conflict to which it alludes',[45] it is reaching towards an awareness of its fragmented nature and recognising the broken heap of images that constitutes itself —

[43] Quoted in M. E. Grenander and K. S. Narayana Rao, 'The Waste Land and the Upanishads: What Does the Thunder Say?', *Indian Literature*, 14 (1971), 85–98 (p. 93).
[44] Krishnananda, p. 329.
[45] David Spurr, *Conflicts in Consciousness: T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Criticism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 44.

[t]hese fragments I have shored against my ruins'. As Levenson has rightly claimed, 'fragments of consciousness have become a consciousness of fragmentation'.[46] Knowledge of existence and of 'being' has been acquired, resulting in the chanting of the three *shantih* — 'peace which passeth our understanding'.

It is interesting, however, to note the change that Eliot has made to the last line of the poem. In the draft of *The Waste Land*, there is a full stop after the last *shantih*, but in the final version, the poem ends without any punctuation. Eliot's choice in the omission of a full stop suggests that the salvation journey of the poetic consciousness is incomplete; it implies that this sense of peace that is obtained is not permanent and final. The inward journey of surrendering oneself is an ongoing process: enlightenment of the self must be practised. Resonating the Upanishad teaching, the path and endeavour to attain freedom should be 'practised in our daily activity'.[47] To alleviate and liberate itself from suffering, therefore, the poetic consciousness must always be conscious of its existence and practise *datta, dayadhvam*, and *damyata*; to constantly look beyond its own subjectivity and practise compassion, for only then can inner peace be achieved.

Depicting a fragmented poetic consciousness, *The Waste Land* captures the essence of the internal world of a human mind: its isolation, disconnection, and suffering. Reading the poem in a Freudian light further shows Eliot's belief of an individual's fragmented nature: like the unconscious mind that is able to draw the seemingly random and disconnected elements of dreams together to achieve a 'special kind of coherence', the disjointed plurality of voices in the poem comes to accept its 'incongruence and incoherence'.[48] For Eliot, the meaning of the poem — and of life — does not come in amalgamating disparate voices or experiences; instead, it lies in forming a new whole out of these fragments by recognising

[46] Levenson, p. 192.
[47] Krishnananda, p. 471.
[48] James McFarlane, 'The Mind of Modernism', in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (London: Penguin, 1976), pp. 71–93 (p. 85).

one's limits and stepping beyond individuality. *The Waste Land*, therefore, conveys the process of perspective-taking: its fragmentary nature is highlighted by its shifting perspectives, and only in seeing its own smallness can the poetic consciousness alleviate its own alienation.

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