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**“AND I MUST BORROW EVERY CHANGING SHAPE | TO FIND  
EXPRESSION”: DIRECT BORROWINGS  
FROM FRENCH SYMBOLISM IN T. S. ELIOT’S POETRY**

An admirer of French poetry, T. S. Eliot could not help being immersed in the French language as well. One of his youthful and Laforgue-inspired Harvard poems bears a French title: “Conversation Galante.” Though his command of French was poor when he first became acquainted with the poetry of the French symbolists at Harvard, Eliot soon made up for the deficiency during his “romantic year” in Paris. There was even a time, immediately following his stay in the French capital, when he contemplated settling in France permanently and writing in French. Towards the end of his life, Eliot recalled: “I had at that time the idea of giving up English and trying to settle down and scrape along in Paris and gradually write French” (*Letters* 15). Even though this plan was never implemented, Eliot did write several poems in French, namely “Le Directeur,” “Mélange Adultère de Tout,” “Lune de Miel” and “Dans le Restaurant.” These were published in the *Poems 1920* volume, but represent, as in the case of Pound, merely exercises or experiments in Eliot’s work. They are, however, indicative of his general tendency to incorporate French words, expressions and phrases into his own verse. Interestingly, the title of one of Eliot’s French poems, “Mélange Adultère de Tout,” is directly borrowed from Corbière’s poem “Épitaphe”:

Il ne naquit par aucun bout,  
Fut toujours poussé vent-de-bout,  
Et fut un arlequin-ragoût,  
Mélange adultère de tout. (28)

This is not an isolated incident, but a sign of Eliot’s penchant for direct borrowings from the French language and French poetry.

In Eliot's verse, several types of French borrowings may be distinguished. First of all, there are French words which he uses in his poetry: *cauchemar* (*Complete Poems* 8), *bric-à-brac* (10), *eau de Cologne* (15), *née* (35), *antique* (42, 63), *l'entre deux guerres* (128). Secondly, there are the Latinizations Kerry Weinberg points to (23): English words of Romance rather than Anglo-Saxon origin, which, however, Eliot uses in their French sense, disregarding the somewhat different meaning these vocabulary items have acquired in English. A good example would be Eliot's use of such verbs as *regard* or *remark* in the phrases "Regard that woman" (*Complete Poems* 14), "Remark the cat" and "Regard the moon" (15), all from "Rhapsody on a Windy Night." In Eliot's poem, the verb *regard* means the same as *look*. The word is rarely used in this sense in English, and brings to mind the French verb *regarder*, from which it derives. This is also the case with *remark*, which in Eliot's use signifies the same as the French *remarquer*, while in English it would probably be more natural to employ the verb *notice*. Other instances would be phrases like "descend the stair" in "Prufrock" (4) and "a morsel of butter" in "Rhapsody" (15).

Eliot is not, however, content with borrowing individual French words. He goes further, and "steals," to use an expression he himself favours, entire lines from French poetry, or rather, to be precise, French symbolist poetry. It is no secret that such direct debts exist. Even to someone with little knowledge of French symbolism, they are immediately recognisable and traceable, thanks to the notes which accompany Eliot's poems, either provided by the author himself, as in the case of *The Waste Land*, or by editors. Information about these directly borrowed lines may also be found in various secondary sources on Eliot. It is, however, scattered and incomplete, with little or no commentary. For instance, the section on Eliot's allusive practice in *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot* briefly mentions only two direct borrowings from French (Moody 183, 184). Therefore, I have thought it proper to bring instances of such borrowings together in one paper. I have done so for the sake of order and revision, but also, more importantly, in an attempt to see what role they play in the poems, how they relate to Eliot's poetic vision in its totality and to his relationship with the symbolists.

In Eliot's verse, there are altogether six instances of direct borrowings from French symbolist poetry. Each of these lines is borrowed from a different poet. More interestingly, the order in which the borrowings appear roughly reflects the order in which, as is commonly assumed, the symbolists influenced the different stages of Eliot's poetic development, moving from Laforgue and Corbière through Baudelaire and Verlaine to Nerval and Mallarmé. It is symbolic that the one missing from this list is Rimbaud, who tends, though somewhat unfairly, to be disregarded in terms of his

connection with Eliot. It is also interesting to see how the borrowings are placed in Eliot's *œuvre*: the Laforgue line appears in Eliot's first volume; the Corbière one in the second; the borrowings from Baudelaire, Verlaine and Nerval in *The Waste Land*; Mallarmé's line in *Four Quartets*.

In "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," the line "La lune ne garde aucune rancune" (Eliot, *Complete Poems* 15) comes from Laforgue's "Complainte de cette bonne Lune":

Là, voyons, mam'zell'la Lune,  
Ne gardons pas ainsi rancune;  
Entrez en danse, et vous aurez  
Un collier de soleils dorés. (22)

Thomas R. Rees comments on this appropriation by saying that in "Rhapsody" not only the phrase, but also the tone is Laforguian. For both poets, the moon becomes "a worn-out old beauty who is alone with her memories and regrets" (Rees 119), though in Eliot's poem "The moon has lost her memory" (Eliot, *Complete Poems* 15). The difference Rees does, nevertheless, notice is between the "transparent mocking tone" in which Laforgue teases the moon and Eliot's "muted and subdued" remarks (119). Eliot's moon becomes an old prostitute, as seen in the association of "old nocturnal smells" with "female smells in shuttered rooms" (*Complete Poems* 15). Rees concludes:

In both poems the moon is rather feeble-minded and watered down. Surely she is not the distant and ethereal goddess of the older poets; instead she is more like that "old battered lantern hung aloft" which appears in "Conversation Galante." (118-119)

While Rees is right about the parallels between the two poems, he seems to disregard the fact that in Laforgue the moon occupies a special position. Not only is it the key motif in his poetry, which is not the case with Eliot, but it also plays a quasi-metaphysical role. Laforgue's interest in ancient lunar myths verges on something of a lunar cult (Łopatyńska 2). He believes the moon to have divine properties, associating it, ultimately, with the Virgin Mary, as the address to "Notre-Dame" (Laforgue 23) in the poem in question suggests. Though in "Complainte de cette bonne Lune" the moon does not acquire such metaphysical connotations, it is worth remembering that there are other poems by Laforgue in which the motif is given more serious treatment. In this larger context, Laforgue still seems to be more connected with the romantic tradition, while Eliot goes one step further towards disillusionment and even cynicism, and into the twentieth century. On the other hand, the moon's association with death, frequent in Laforgue, makes one think of Eliot's death-in-life theme, suggested at the end of "Rhapsody":

The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,  
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.

The last twist of the knife. (*Complete Poems* 16)

In Eliot's "Mélange Adultère de Tout," the speaker humorously enumerates the different places he has been to and the various jobs he has done, spanning three continents. Remarks such as "En Amérique, professeur" and "A Londres, un peu banquier" (28) might suggest an autobiographical dimension, which sends the reader back to the Corbière poem from which the title is borrowed. In "Épitaphe," the speaker, who might be identified with Corbière himself, looks back on his life, referring to himself as an adulterous mixture of everything. This time, there are similarities between the two poems which go beyond one common motif. Both are attempts to sum up one's existence and end with a reference to death; both are written in brusque, telegraphic style; both contain colloquialisms; both are ironic. And yet one cannot help thinking that in Corbière's poem there is a painful sense of regret and uselessness, which is hard to find in Eliot's. Though it is the French poet who uses third-person narration where his Anglo-American successor employs the more personal *je*, in the seemingly lighter "Mélange Adultère de Tout" there is the detachment typical of Eliot, while Corbière's "Épitaphe" is more lyric, and the tragic bitterness is more directly expressed. In "Mélange Adultère de Tout," such undertones are masked by the sense of exile and hurried confusion the poem's cosmopolitanism exudes.

Since as many as half of Eliot's direct borrowings appear in *The Waste Land*, it is tempting to see how they fit into the structure of the poem. The symmetry one discovers is surprising: the Baudelaire line is placed at the end of part one; the quote from Verlaine in part three; the Nerval borrowing at the end of part five. The three symbolist quotations thus frame the poem, and each of them significantly relates to its overall meaning.

The most celebrated and easily recognisable of them is definitely the one which closes "The Burial of the Dead," the opening section of *The Waste Land*. The line comes from Baudelaire's "Au lecteur": "Hypocrite lecteur, – mon semblable, – mon frère!" (1: 6). In Eliot's interpretation, the line is only slightly changed by the addition of the English second-person pronoun at the beginning and of an extra exclamation mark, placed after the first segment: "You! hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, – mon frère!" (*Complete Poems* 39). The association with *Les Fleurs du mal* is obvious. The catalogue of sins which can be found in Eliot's poem makes one think of the vices Baudelaire enumerates in "Au lecteur" and elaborates in the whole collection. Parallel motifs such as *ennui*, sin, evil and a yearning for redemption establish a strong link between Baudelaire's cycle and Eliot's poem, though the title *Les Fleurs du mal* expresses this much more explicitly: while Eliot's

wasteland is barren, Baudelaire's universe still blooms, but its blossoms are the flowers of evil. "Au lecteur" constitutes the prologue to Baudelaire's collection, and the line borrowed from it by Eliot appears, appropriately, in the introductory section of *The Waste Land*. Additionally, both in Baudelaire's poem and "The Burial of the Dead" the "Hypocrite lecteur" line is the closing one. This suggests a structural similarity, and indeed both *Les Fleurs du mal* and *The Waste Land* consist of several parts, six and five respectively, though, as Weinberg rightly points out, "Baudelaire's poems show a classical unity and clarity compared with those of Eliot, who chose a chaotic form in order to suggest chaos" (58). The French line also has a high symbolic value: it connects two major poems, each of which has gained the status of its author's *opus magnum*.

In Eliot's case, the "Hypocrite lecteur" line is significant for one more reason. By addressing the reader as a peer who, whether willing to admit it or not, shares the author's doubts and dilemmas, Eliot universalises his poetic vision, moving from the romantic microcosm of personal feelings to the modernist macrocosm of the general and the impersonal. Of course, Baudelaire's line stems from a similar urge to transcend the individual. In Eliot, however, it exemplifies a line of thinking which underlies his whole *œuvre*, a restatement of what he expressed, three years earlier, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and poetically achieved in *Prufrock and Other Observations*. The borrowing from Baudelaire in *The Waste Land* stands for Eliot's doctrine of poetic depersonalisation, which the Anglo-American poet tries to achieve by various means, one of them being the incorporation of foreign-language quotations into his own verse. The line plays a double function: it conveys a message and is, at the same time, an illustration of how the message can be put into practice. It indicates a departure from romantic solipsism, from which even the symbolists are not always free.

Another, though lesser-known, symbolist quotation is inserted into "The Fire Sermon": "*Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*" (Eliot, *Complete Poems* 43). As Eliot himself informs the reader in the notes accompanying the poem, the line is borrowed, with slightly altered punctuation, from Verlaine's "Parsifal." Again, the line in question closes the original poem, just as it does a stanza in "The Fire Sermon." The title "Parsifal" immediately sends the reader back to the mythic Percivale, the knight who was allowed to see the Holy Grail. Verlaine's sonnet revolves around the Grail myth, presenting the victorious knight after he has successfully accomplished his mission. The French poet's emphasis in the first two stanzas is, however, on another victory: that of Percivale over female sensuality. The lines "Parsifal a vaincu les Filles" and "Il a vaincu la Femme belle" (427) remind the reader that chastity was a precondition of finding the Holy Grail, and introduce the motif of being torn between

earthly delights and higher ideals, which in Eliot may be found in, for instance, "Journey of the Magi." Yet this allusion to the hell Percivale has vanquished seems ironic when we realise that the Verlaine line is juxtaposed by Eliot with the street ballad about Mrs Porter:

O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter  
 And on her daughter  
 They wash their feet in soda water (*Complete Poems* 43)

Mrs Porter, the owner of a brothel in Manchester (Niemojowski 83), and Sweeney, a recurrent figure in Eliot's poetry, who, as the preceding line informs us, is one of her regulars, are thus placed side by side with the virgin Percivale. The result is contrast between mythic past and sordid present, between chastity and lust, reemphasised by the washing of the feet, which has ironic connotations of purity and religious ablution.

The Verlaine line fits perfectly into the overall framework of the poem, and of Eliot's poetry in general, and it is hard to agree with James Longenbach, who speaks of "the utterly inexplicable epiphany of Verlaine's children chanting in the dome" (184). For one thing, the very chanting itself adds a significant dimension. The children's heavenly song is ironically paralleled by the vulgar ditty about Mrs Porter, each starting with the exclamatory "O." Both point to Verlaine, the most musical of the French symbolists, making one think, on a deeper level, about the way Eliot implements Verlaine's famous "De la musique avant toute chose" (326) in his own verse. Importantly, the quotation from "Parsifal" encapsulates key motifs from *The Waste Land*: that of lust seen as the ultimate source of evil on the one hand, and the fertility myths associated with the Holy Grail on the other. "Il a guéri le roi" (427), says Verlaine of Percivale, and one immediately thinks of Eliot's Fisher King, awaiting healing and salvation in the closing stanza of *The Waste Land*:

I sat upon the shore  
 Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
 Shall I at least set my lands in order? (*Complete Poems* 50)

Yet if Verlaine's sonnet ends on a note of triumph and glory, reinforced by the children's song, in *The Waste Land* the quest for the symbolic "vase pur où respandit le Sang réel" (Verlaine 427) remains open-ended.

This inconclusiveness, this sense of being tragically suspended is fortified by a quotation from the opening stanza of Nerval's "El Desdichado":

Je suis le ténébreux, – le veuf, – l'inconsolé,  
 Le prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie:  
 Ma seule étoile est morte, – et mon luth constellé  
 Porte le soleil noir de la Mélancolie. (693)

In the final stanza of *The Waste Land*, Eliot italicises line two of Nerval's sonnet: "*Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*" (*Complete Poems* 50). An analysis of Nerval's most celebrated poem explains why the quotation is fitting. The Spanish title, which is the motto of a mysterious knight from Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, means *the disinherited*, and it is the word which best describes the condition of Nerval's speaker as well as Eliot's Fisher King. Both are dispossessed, alien and ill-fated. This sense of loneliness is emphasised by the Fisher King's sexual impotence and the speaker of "El Desdichado" describing himself as a widower. Their personal predicament, due to sterility and solitude respectively, has larger implications: the prince of Aquitania and the Fisher King are both rulers of a disintegrating land, and both are sitting on the ruins, contemplating and mourning the disintegration. Nerval's "prince d'Aquitaine" is inextricably linked with "la tour abolie." The coat of arms of the mysterious knight from Walter Scott's novel was an uprooted oak (Lagarde and Michard 274). Fowlie links this with the three silver towers in the coat of arms of the Labrunie family Nerval believed to be descended from (20-21). The result is the image of the crumbling tower. This Nervalian motif is incorporated by Eliot into *The Waste Land* and appears earlier in the same part of the poem:

Falling towers  
 Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
 Vienna London  
 Unreal (*Complete Poems* 48)

Nerval's sonnet is thus a starting point for Eliot's overall vision of collapse and disintegration, associating the motif of the fallen tower with the "Unreal City" passage at the beginning of *The Waste Land*, itself inspired, as we know from Eliot's notes on the poem (51), by Baudelaire's "Les sept vieillards." The lines "Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves, | Où le spectre en plain jour raccroche le passant!" (Baudelaire 1: 87) are transformed by Eliot into:

Unreal City,  
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
 I had not thought death had undone so many. (*Complete Poems* 39)

Between a Baudelairean image and a line directly borrowed from Nerval, Eliot coherently and consistently depicts a declining world. In "El Desdichado," Nerval does refer to a breakdown as well, but of a personal kind. The line "Et j'ai deux fois vainqueur traversé l'Archéron" (693) alludes

to Nerval's bouts of mental illness (Lagarde and Michard 274). Eliot's take on disintegration in *The Waste Land* is incomparably more universal and comprehensive.

Importantly, there is another divergence between Eliot's and Nerval's respective images of a disinherited ruler. The Fisher King's query "Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (Eliot, *Complete Poems* 50) is not asked by the speaker of "El Desdichado." Instead, the latter conjures up memories of a happier past:

Dans la nuit du tombeau, toi qui m'as consolé  
Rends-moi le Pausilippe et la mer d'Italie,  
La fleur qui plaisait tant à mon cœur désolé,  
Et la treille où le pampre à la rose s'allie. (Nerval 693)

Eliot's Fisher King, by contrast, looks to the future. This dissimilarity might suggest that Eliot's anticipation of the ultimate disaster in *The Waste Land* is not total and irreversible. Marjorie Perloff sees in the final lines of the poem an "appeal, however oblique, to an outside source of authority" (21<sup>st</sup>-Century 38). Though her claim refers to the structure of *The Waste Land*, a comparison with Nerval's sonnet reveals that it is applicable to its content as well. In the poem's closing section, Eliot utters a cry for help and a hope of regeneration in keeping with the Grail myth, whose theme is reinforced by both the allusion to Verlaine's "Parsifal" and the one to Nerval's "El Desdichado."

Of the six direct borrowings from French symbolist poetry in Eliot's verse, the first five are quoted in the original. The alterations Eliot makes to those lines are slight: a grammatical change to the Laforgue line, the addition of an extra syllable to the line borrowed from Baudelaire, as well as minor capitalisation and punctuation changes in almost all of them. What those five borrowings have in common is their conspicuousness. They are, to quote Eliot's essay "What Dante Means to Me," lines "one has consciously borrowed, adapting a line of verse to a different language or period or context" (*To Criticize* 127). They all stand out from the poems into which they are incorporated primarily because they are in French. Moreover, in the case of the three direct borrowings in *The Waste Land*, Eliot makes additional attempts at emphasis: the Baudelaire line is enclosed by quotation marks, while the lines taken from Verlaine and Nerval respectively are italicised. As if to ensure the reader's attention is drawn to the quotations, their sources are indicated in Eliot's notes accompanying the poem. In comparison, the sixth direct borrowing seems unusually camouflaged among the lines of "Little Gidding":

Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us  
 To purify the dialect of the tribe  
 And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight,  
 Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age  
 To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort. (Eliot, *Complete Poems* 141)

The line "To purify the dialect of the tribe" is Eliot's version of the famous Mallarméan phrase "Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu" (70). The line comes from "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe." We thus have to do with a tribute within a tribute: Mallarmé pays homage to Poe, and Eliot, in turn, recognises his debt to the French poet. Significantly, he does so in *Four Quartets*, meant to crown his "lifetime's effort." The passage into which the Mallarmé line is incorporated is the one in which the speaker meets the "familiar compound ghost" (140). Various poets have been identified as the ones evoked in the apparition, and one of them is Mallarmé.

"Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" is a sonnet presenting a paradigm of artistic destiny. The motif of the tomb, mentioned in the title and elaborated in the poem, reminds the reader that Poe, unappreciated in his lifetime, had to die for his greatness to be recognised. Thus, "In my end is my beginning," a line from another of Eliot's *Four Quartets*, "East Coker" (*Complete Poems* 129), would be an adequate summary of his poetic career. The analogy shows that Eliot shares Mallarmé's concept of eternity, in which the artist's death is a precondition of renaissance through his *œuvre*: "la mort triomphait dans cette voix étrange" (Mallarmé 70). Like most great artists, Poe was ahead of his times and hence doomed to be misunderstood by his contemporaries. Mallarmé presents him as an angel whose task was to "Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu." The message of the poem might thus be that the public should make an effort to comprehend poets despite their being discouragingly hermetic and obscure, because in this off-putting obscurity lies the germ of the future.

It is impossible, at this point, to escape analogies to Mallarmé himself, and, by extension, to Eliot. From the connection between "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" and "Little Gidding" a poetic trio emerges: Poe, Mallarmé and Eliot. We thus obtain a continuum which spans two centuries, in keeping with Eliot's concept of tradition, and establishes poetry as an art which is preeminently difficult. The central drama here is that of composing verse which is worlds apart from everyday experience. The poet, aware, as Mallarmé is, that "Parler n'a trait à la réalité des choses que commercialement" (366), is driven into alienation and incomprehensibility by his poetic pursuits. It is no coincidence that, of all poets, Eliot refers to one whose obsession with language is legendary, and does so in *Four Quartets*, which is deeply concerned with the power of words. Importantly, the meaning of Eliot's reference to "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" transcends the linguistic level and takes on metaphysical connotations: central to Mallarmé's

poem are, according to C. R. François, the "Notion chrétienne de salut par la Parole" and the "mystère de l'Accomplissement" (67). Language is central to Eliot's cycle, as is his Mallarméan desire to find its highest, purest form in the shape of poetry. The verb *purify* in Eliot's English transliteration of Mallarmé's phrase makes one think, ultimately, of the ideal of pure poetry, a goal which links both poets. Theirs is a pursuit of the Absolute, not only in poetic, but also in metaphysical terms: the notions of salvation through the word and completion François speaks of inform Eliot's *Four Quartets* as well as Mallarmé's sonnet.

As his poetic *œuvre* evolves, Eliot's treatment of direct borrowings from French symbolist poetry alters. What was conspicuous and openly acknowledged in the early poems and *The Waste Land* is hidden and subdued in *Four Quartets*. By translating Mallarmé's line into English, omitting quotation marks and italics, and failing to pinpoint the source of the citation, Eliot neutralises the borrowing. Already the lines taken from Laforgue, Corbière, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Nerval contributed to the depersonalisation of Eliot's poetic voice. In *Four Quartets*, this strategy is taken further: the symbolist echoes melt into the overall voice of the poem, which is *par excellence* anonymous, unidentifiable and disembodied. In the earlier poetry, Eliot relies on the polyphony of French symbolist voices to detach himself from his own poetic expression. In *Four Quartets*, all voices merge into one of unrivalled purity and transparency, allowing Eliot to achieve a deeper level of the universal, which encompasses the essence of humanity.

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## „A ja mam szukać przebrania, | Żeby oddać uczucie”. Intertekstualny aspekt bezpośrednich zapożyczeń w poezji T. S. Eliota

Bezpośrednie zapożyczenia z poezji francuskich symbolistów, które Eliot włącza do własnych utworów ukazują angloamerykańskiego poetę jako bardziej pozbawionego złudzeń i cynicznego niż jego francuscy poprzednicy. Na ich tle Eliot jawi się jako poeta chłodny i beznamiętny, który często podkreśla ironiczny kontrast między wzniosłym lub tragicznym tonem symbolistycznego wiersza, z którego pochodzi dane zapożyczenie a trywialnością czy wulgarnością kontekstu, w którym to zapożyczenie umieszcza we własnym utworze.

Obecność cytatów w poezji Eliota ma dalekosiężne konsekwencje i nadaje jego utworom wymiar intertekstualny. Technika zapożyczeń to dla Eliota kolejny sposób na osiągnięcie poetyckiej depersonalizacji i uniknięcie bezpośredniości ekspresji przy jednoczesnym złożeniu hołdu tradycji. Ponadto, bezpośrednie zapożyczenia z poezji symbolistycznej stanowią niejako podsumowanie kluczowych motywów w twórczości Eliota, takich jak kontrast między wzniosłością a przyziemnością oraz między tym, co romantyczne i tym, co żałosne, poczucie zagubienia i straty, kosmopolityzm, utrata tożsamości, jałowość, samotność, bezradność i świadomość rozpadu. Symbolistyczne zapożyczenia podkreślają też filozoficzno-religijne fascynacje Eliota, którym dał wyraz w swojej poezji: rozważania na temat istoty grzechu i odkupienia przeplatają się w niej z refleksjami dotyczącymi losu człowieka rozdartego pomiędzy ziemskimi rozkoszami i wzniosłym ideałem, czystością i żądzą, mityczną przeszłością i odstręcającą teraźniejszością.

Cytaty z francuskich symbolistów, rozmieszczone w twórczości Eliota z zadziwiającą symetrią, są niczym drogowskazy, ukazujące jak poezja autora *Ziemi jałowej* ewoluuje w kierunku zagadnień o charakterze filozoficznym, metaliterackim i metafizycznym takich jak czas, wieczność, język, rola poety, muzyczność wiersza, a także dążenie do Absolutu w wymiarze artystycznym i religijnym.