

WW1 Aftermath

A black and white photograph of a massive crowd of people filling a city street. The crowd is dense, with many individuals wearing hats and coats, suggesting a cooler climate. In the center of the crowd, a person holds a large, light-colored sign with text that is partially legible, appearing to say "The...". The street is lined with multi-story buildings, and the overall atmosphere is one of a significant public gathering or protest.

- **Political consequences**
- **Social consequences**
- **Psychological consequences**

Psychological consequences



- Decay of bourgeois values (materialism, utilitarianism, respectability.....)
- Lack of new values
- Sense of loss
- Lack of certainties
- Hopelessness
- No future
- Fear

After 4 years of war, what remained of the world before the conflict?





THE WASTE LAND

T.S.Eliot 1922



Waste

- Waste (adj): wild, desolate, not useful
- Waste (n) garbage , refuse



Hence

What remains of the world before the war is just garbage. Just meaningless, desolate fragments of a whole:the fragments of western cultural heritage





Fragmentation

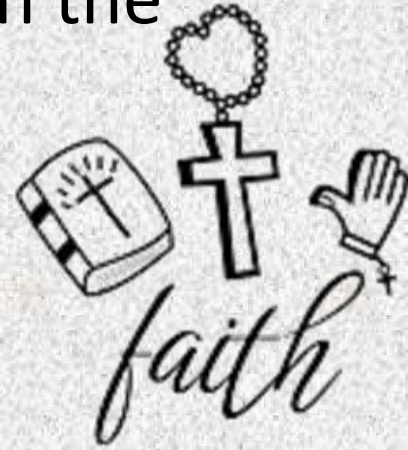
- Humanity's psyche had been shattered by World War 1
- T.S. Eliot aims at representing humanity's damaged psyche
- On this purpose Eliot's poem is destructured, fragmented: bits and pieces of dialogues , images, foreign words are collaged together
- Fragmentation in poetry was a way to demonstrate the chaotic state of modern existence





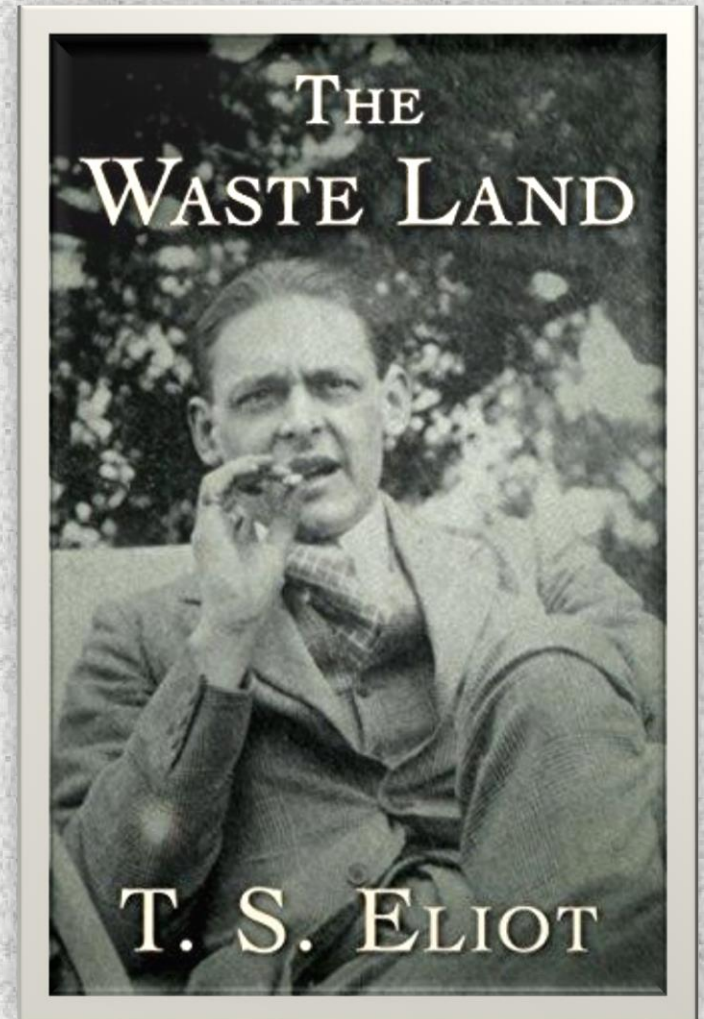
Mythic and Religious Ritual

- Religious symbols and myths are greatly used in the Waste Land to make:
 1. **the past** seen as a **whole** (fertile, reassuring)
 2. **the present** seen as **fragmented** (bare, frightful)
- Traditional myths lose their connotation in the present



Structure of the Poem

- **Epigraph**
- **Five Sections:**
 1. The Burial of the Dead
 2. A Game of Chess
 3. The Fire Sermon
 4. Death by Water
 5. What the Thunder said



The Epigraph

- "Nam Sybillam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum pueri illi dicerent: Στβμλλτί Θέλεις; respondebat illa: άποθνειν Θελω.«
- "With my own eyes I saw the Sybil of Cumae hanging in a bottle; and when the boys said to her: Sybil, what do you want?" she replied: "I want to die.
- From Satyricon. Petronius.



The Sibyl of Cumae



- Prophetess in service to Apollo
- Apollo wants to seduce her and as a gift he wants to grant her one wish
- The Sibyl at first accepts: she wants Apollo to make her immortal
- When she changes her mind, Apollo grants her wish anyhow.
- She will be immortal, but she'll also grow older and older.
- Time consumes her body, till she becomes so small to be confined in a vial and exposed to public derision, just like Trimalchion in the epigraph.

Ezra Pound



- For Ezra Pound
«*il miglior fabbro*»
- Praise given by Dante to Arnaut Daniel (Purgatory), for being a better wordsmith than him (Dante)
- Pound helped Eliot edit the drafts of *The Waste Land*, and he is at least partially responsible for its current formatting.
- He actually worked as the blacksmith of his poem erasing entire passages of even pages, thus transforming the original whole into «*a heap of broken images*»

so much
of
were not in evidence
short as were
to warrant

The typist home at teatime, who begins
to clear ~~away~~ away her ~~broken~~ breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out squalid food ~~in time~~;
Prepares the room and sets the room to rights.

qui
dina
les
goffes
de la
rime

Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations meet the sun's last rays,
And on the divan ~~piled~~, (at night her bed),
Are stockings, dirty camisoles, and stays.

inventions
not warranted
by any real
evidence
with it

A bright kimono wraps her as she sprawls
In nervous torpor on the window seat;
A touch of art is given by the false
Japanese print, ~~purchased in Oxford Street~~.

not in
hand
leading?
hong

Too
early

I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs,
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest,
Knowing the number of these crawling bugs,
I too awaited the expected guest.

A youth of ~~beauteous~~, spotted about the face,
One of those simple loiterers whom we say
We may have seen in any public place
At almost any hour of night or day.

Personal

Fride has not ~~fixed~~ him with ambitious rage,
His hair is thick with grease, and thick with scurf,
~~perhaps~~ his inclinations touch the stage -
Not sharp enough to associate with the turf.

Perhaps
be damned.

He, ^{is} the young man carabouler, ~~will stare~~
Boldly about, in "London's one cafe",
And he will tell her, ~~with casual air~~,
Grandly "I have been with Nevinson today".

all around
night 5

Perhaps a cheap house agent's clerk, who flits
Daily, from flat to flat, with one bold stare;
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

mix of
p. 16 coupled
+ girls from
not good -

He munches with the same persistent stare,
He knows his way with women (and that's that!)
Impertinently tilting back his chair
And dropping cigarette ash on the mat.

The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired;
Endeavours to engage her in caresses,
Which still are unrequited, if undesired.

Is April the cruellest month...?

When April with his *showers sweet* with fruit
The *drought of March* has pierced unto the
root And *bathed* each vein with *liquor* that
has *power* To *generate* therein and sire the
flower;

When Zephyr also has, with his *sweet*
breath, *Quickened* again, *in every holt and*
heath,

The tender shoots and buds, and the young
sun

Into the Ram one half his course has
run, And many little birds make melody
That sleep through all the night with open eye
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-

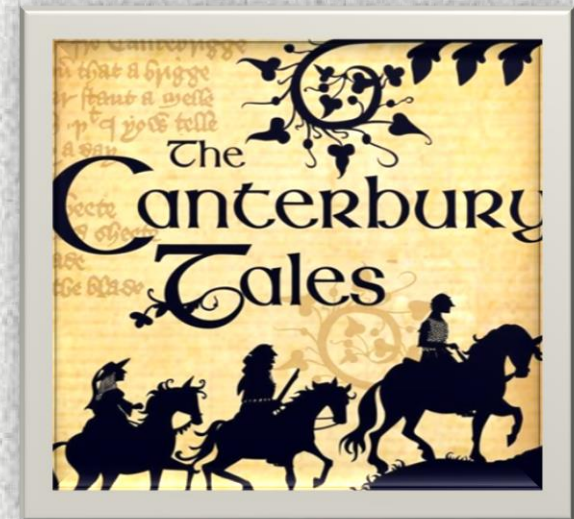
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,
(Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales*)

The spring showers are :

- Sweet
- Powerful
- Generate life
- Boost natural rebirth

Men:

- seek for spiritual rebirth
- are in harmony with nature



The Burial of the Dead

April is the *cruellest* month,
breeding

Lilacs out of the *dead land*, mixing
Memory and desire, *stirring*

Dull roots with *spring rain*.

Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding

A little life with *dried tubers*.

The spring showers are:

- Painful
- A call to life
- Powerless
- Ineffective

Men are:

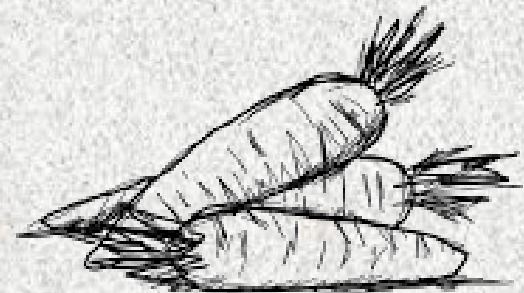
- Dull roots
- Deaf to the call to life

The Objective Correlative

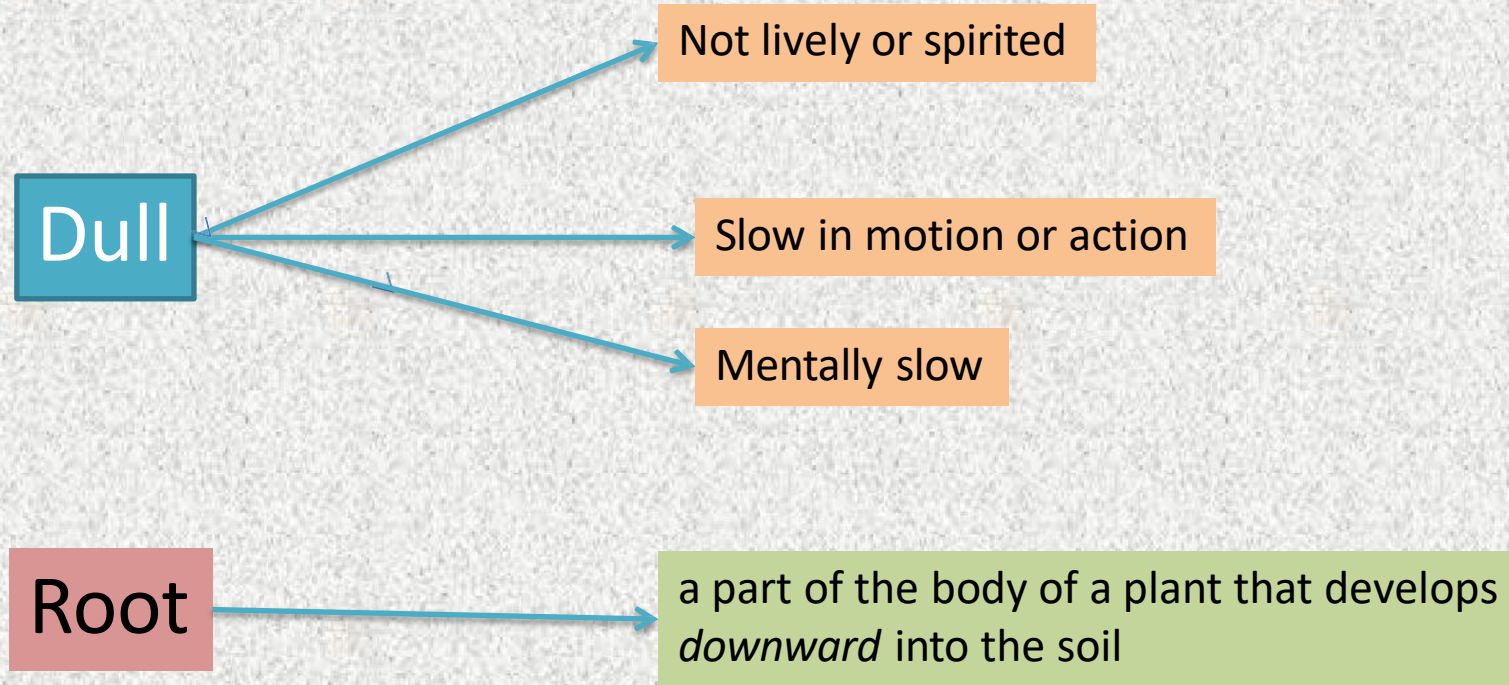
- Term coined by the American painter **Washington Allston**
- Correlates the state of mind of the poet to a series of tangible well-define objects
- Feelings are no longer described but become real (objects).
- «Ossi di Seppia»(Montale, 1925) example of objective correlative.

Metaphor or Objective Correlative?

- **Metaphor**: figure of speech that describes an object or action in a way that isn't literally true, but helps explain an idea or make a comparison. Hence: words, words, words..
- Ex: "*He is a walking encyclopedia*" = cultured, cultivated..
- **Objective correlative**: feelings and state of minds are correlated to tangible objects . Hence: things.
- Ex: Post war men were «*dull roots*».



Being a «**dull root**»



Hence :

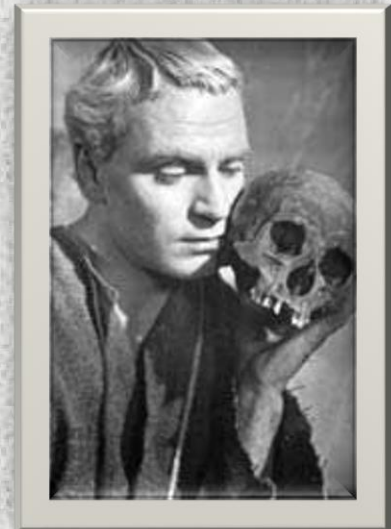
Modern men refuse the call to life represented by Spring rain and like roots they prefer to develop downwards into the soil, rather than sprouting.

Hamlet

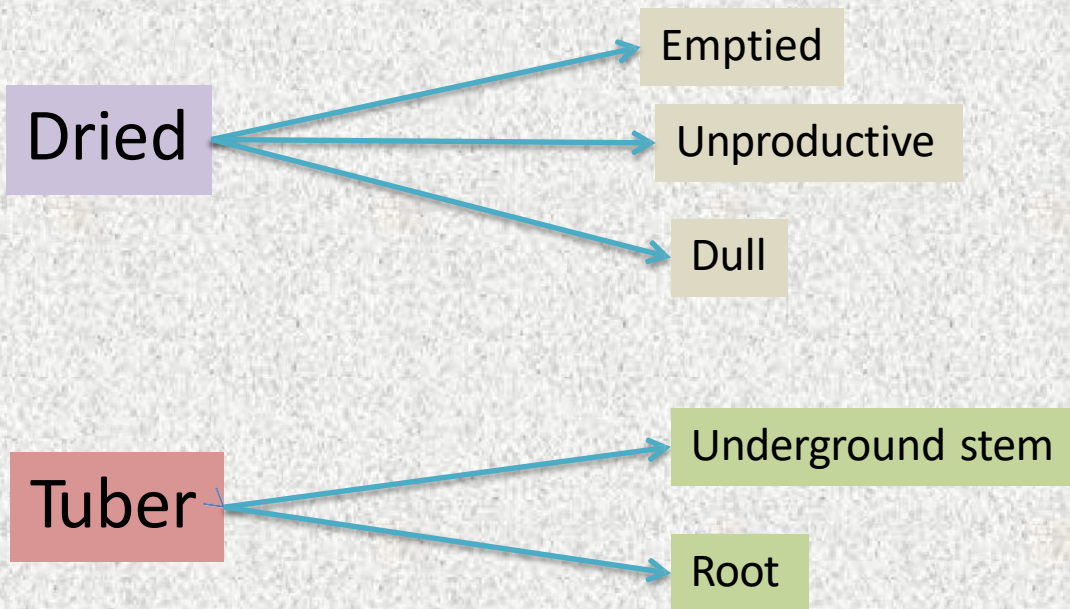
- Etymology → Amloði → dim-witted
- His father's ghost calls him to revenge his murder.
- After a moment of rage, he ponders and feels unfit:

*«The time is out of joint,
oh cursed spite that I was ever born
to set it right»*

- Pretends to be mad to delay action.
- Acts only when it is inevitable and eventually dies in a final duel planned by the villain Claudius.



New values as «Dried Tubers»



Hence

The war has emptied men of values, certainties and hopes. The consequent depressive state also due to the impossibility of filling that void, makes life unbearable.

The Burial of the Dead

*April is the **cruelest** month,
breeding*

*Lilacs out of the **dead land**,
mixing Memory and desire,
stirring*

***Dull roots** with **spring rain**.*

*Winter kept us warm,
covering Earth in forgetful
snow, feeding A little life
with **dried tubers**.*

The spring showers are:

- *Painful*
- *A call to life*
- *Powerless*
- *Ineffective*

Men are:

- *Dull roots*
- *Deaf to the call to life*

Lines 2-8, Usually, Easter Sunday, which commemorates Christ's resurrection, falls in April. But Eliot ironically comments here that April is the "cruellest month" as the stirring of natural life and the spiritual resurrection symbolized in Easter fill humans today not with hope but fear and apprehension, if not despair

Line 2, "Breeding lilacs...": According to traditional vegetation myths, Lilacs symbolized fertility. This flowers has a poetic associations with death - the lilac for its purple color of mourning and exquisite beauty were perhaps celebrated by Whitman in his elegy for Lincoln "When Lilacs last in the Doovyard Bloom'ed."



Tiresias

« *The old man with wrinkled dug* »



- Main speaking voice of the Waste Land
- According to myths, punished by the goddess Hera for having killed a female snake while copulating and turned into a woman.
- Tiresias becomes the priestess of Hera , marries and has children.
- After 7 years when Tiresias sees again two snakes while copulating, she/he refrains from doing anything, therefore he/she is allowed to regain his masculinity
- Tiresias supports Zeus in a family dispute with Hera about who had more sexual pleasure:a man or a woman. Having experienced both genders,he was the most qualified on the subject and says women.
- Having lost the dispute, Hera punishes Tiresias and strikes him blind.
- Zeus can do nothing to stop or reverse her wife's curse, as Greek gods cannot change what others have decided, so he gives him the power to predict the future and the lifespan of seven lives as recompense.

Why Tiresias?

- Having been both man and woman makes him a unifying figure in The Waste Land.
- Tiresias links the ancient and modern worlds and giving unity to that “heap of broken images” which is the present state of things.
- In the desolation and despair of The Waste Land, he reactivates his ancient role – that of a prophet.
- In this mythological context, Eliot seems to indicate that the state of the waste land will not always be perpetual as long as Tiresias directs us.



Countess Marie

«mixing memories and desires»

Summer surprised *us*, coming over the
Starnbergersee

With a shower of rain; *we* stopped in
the colonnade,

And went on in sunlight, into the
Hofgarten, And drank coffee, and
talked for an hour.

Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus
Litauen, echt deutsch.

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.

- *There is a dramatic change of tone and tempo here.*
- *Abrupt transition from the slow pace and solemn mood of the opening lines, which Tiresias - the narrator seems to intone as a sort of interior monologue or soliloquy.*
- *In the 11 lines, the speaker seems to have changed and we, apparently, hear the narration of countess Marie Larisch about her childhood memories and present life.*
- *This passage of her reminiscences throws light upon her early emotional experiences, her wanderings through Europe as a political refugee from her native Lithuania and her own loss of identity resulting from her life as an ex - royal exile.*
- *This section creates a picture of an emotional waste land in the lives of aristocratic women like countess Marie who suffered great physical hardships and psychological dislocations as a result of the political turmoil in Europe immediately before during and soon after World War I.*