

## **A Method in the Madness of T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land*:**

### **A Paradigmatic Reading .**

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*The paper attempts to create some form of an order in the otherwise 'disorderly' poem by T.S.Eliot, The Waste Land. For this, it borrows the method of oppositionary thinking from structuralism, especially as propounded by Claude Levi Strauss' essay 'The Structural Study of Myth'. Thus the paper tries to answer the question -- How can the disparate signs in The Waste Land be organised as a systematic network?*

*The researcher hypothesises that The Waste Land can be read as a myth to facilitate the deployment of Levi-Strauss' method. The main signifiers in the poem can then be organised as paradigms or bundles of relations under two primary contradictions addressed by the poem. She refrains from using Levi-Strauss's term 'mytheme' because the signifiers in this poem lack the chronological relationship required for identifying mythemes. She hypothesises that the two contradictions addressed by the poem are - the contradiction between premodernity and modernity, the contradiction between life and death.*

This paper attempts to analyse T.S Eliot's *Waste Land*, using tenets from structuralism, especially Claude Levi-Strauss's methods for paradigmatic reading of myths. This is a purely textual form of analysis of a literary 'classic' and can be deemed unfashionable in a time of cultural and contextual studies. In writing this paper, I mainly target teachers, research scholars and post-graduate students of English Literature in Indian universities, where the poem is still taught. I hope that this paper will reveal interesting 'everyday' possibilities of literary theory to them. It forges a connection between two entities that have become part of everyday discourse for them – structuralism and *The Waste Land*.

I have chosen the tenets of structuralism, over other literary theories. This is because structuralism is most appropriate for the study of, what David Lodge has correctly observed as, the "principle of similarity and contrast" in *The Waste Land* (Lodge 103). Structuralism professes a systematic study of the structures or networks *between* the entities (here, the word-groups), instead of the entities themselves. Therefore, I can concern myself with the

relations between the word-groups – how they are similar or different from each other -- rather than merely their individual meanings.

In using structuralist principles to read myths of so called primitive people, Claude Levi-Strauss claims that the ‘savage mind’ is not so savage after all. Rather, it can be as scientific and logical as that of the modern human mind. He theorises that mythical thinking is the primitive human’s strategy to come to terms with binary oppositions or contradictions that perplex it. *By a paradigmatic reading of a myth, one can tease out the binary opposition at the heart of it.* This tenet will play a prominent role in the analytical method adopted by this research paper.

In his essay “The Structural Study of Myth”, Levi-Strauss proposes a paradigmatic or two dimensional reading of myth. For this, the main events are arranged linearly or chronologically from left to right. Next, the ‘similar’ events are placed one below the other. These columns or “bundle” of similar events (7) are mythemes, the basic units of a myth. The main events of the myth are thus arranged in rows and columns, as a table. *A non-chronological or paradigmatic dimension is revealed along the vertical axis.* This tenet will also be used extensively in this paper. The horizontal axis represents the linear or chronological or syntagmatic relations between the events.

Levi-Strauss’ paradigmatic reading of the Oedipus myth yields four mythemes: 1) overrating of blood relations, 2) underrating of blood relations, 3) denial of autochthonous nature of man and 4) persistence of autochthonous nature of man. ‘Autochthonous’ means ‘born from the earth’. According to him, the myth of Oedipus attempts to settle the contradiction with regard to the birth of human beings: are human beings born from a sexual union (born from two?) or from the earth ( born from one?). The reading is diagrammatically represented in Table 1.

Levi-Strauss derives his method of identifying binary contradictions and elements in myth from Jakobson’s distinctive features of phonemes. However, while Jakobson’s phonetic features can have only a binary existence, Levi-Strauss’s mythical features can have partial existences or “mediators” (‘Study of Myth’18). He emphasises the role of mediators, in his three-dimensional reading of myths. He states that “mythical thought always progresses from the awareness of oppositions towards their resolution” (17). The attempt to resolve these extremes yields a series, in which the extremes are placed at the ends and they are mediated by various intermediaries – “mediators of the first order, of the second order and so on, where each term generates the next by a double process of opposition and correlation” (18).

According to him, this is the reason why mythical figures, such as gods can be simultaneously good and bad.

Levi-Strauss also borrows the two axes – paradigmatic(vertical) and syntagmatic (horizontal) -- in his two dimensional reading of myths, from Jakobson.

Table 1: Levi-Strauss' Paradigmatic Reading of the Oedipus Myth<sup>1</sup>

| <b>BLOOD RELATIONS<br/>(born from two)</b> |    |                                           | vs | <b>AUTOCHTHONOUS NATURE of MAN<br/>(born from one)</b> |    |                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Mytheme 1</u>                           |    | <u>Mytheme 2</u>                          |    | <u>Mytheme 3</u>                                       |    | <u>Mytheme 4</u>                                    |
| <b>OVERRATING of<br/>Blood Relations</b>   | vs | <b>UNDERRATING of<br/>Blood Relations</b> |    | <b>Denial of<br/>Autochthonous<br/>Origins</b>         | vs | <b>Persistence of<br/>Autochthonous<br/>Origins</b> |
| Cadmos seeks Europa                        |    |                                           |    | Cadmos kills dragon                                    |    | Labdacos (Lame)                                     |
|                                            |    | Spartoi kill one another                  |    | Oedipus kills Sphinx                                   |    | Laos (Left-sided)                                   |
|                                            |    | Oedipus kills Laos                        |    |                                                        |    | Oedipus (Swollen-foot)                              |
| Oedipus marries Jocasta                    |    | Etioles kills Polynices                   |    |                                                        |    |                                                     |
| Antigone buries<br>Polynices               |    |                                           |    |                                                        |    |                                                     |

Source: Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth".

## Methods: Questions and Hypotheses

This essay is concerned with the semantic organisation of *The Waste Land* and not any other linguistic or poetic levels. Can the main signs in *The Waste Land* be organised to yield an underlying network ? For this, I hypothesise that the poem should be read as a myth. I borrow Northrop Frye's tenet which says that literature and mythology occupy the same imaginative realm.

<sup>1</sup> In the original table in Levi-Strauss's essay, the binary oppositions and mythemes are not clearly labelled. I have identified these from the explanations in his essay and included them in the table.

Just as a conventional myth has a definite chronology, Levi-Strauss's most basic unit of a myth, the mytheme, also contains an embryo of a plot or a causal relation. However, in *The Waste Land*, the chronological or syntagmatic aspect is absent. The word-groups can be arranged in any order without destroying the meaning of the poem. Therefore, I will replace Levi-Strauss' term 'mytheme' with 'paradigm' while analysing the poem. The term 'paradigm' will fall within the metaphoric pole of Roman Jakobson. I will use paradigm to mean a 'model' or a 'metaphor'.

I now begin appropriating Levi-Strauss's methods for systematically studying myths. What is the central contradiction addressed by *The Waste Land*? It seems to me that the poem attempts to settle two main contradictions, that of premodernity vs modernity, and that of life vs death.

### **Textual Analysis: Contradiction between Premodernity and Modernity**

The first contradiction is that between premodernity and modernity. Many of the word-groups can be arranged under these two opposites as signifying either of them.

I use premodernity to refer to a historical time before the advent of industrialisation. People were steeped in tradition and religion, and followed agrarian or feudal modes of production. Eliot seems to nostalgically associate it to the 'good old times' when people were sincere and the divide between good and evil was supposedly clear. Premodernity is posited in contrast with modernity when tradition, religion and faith broke down to give way to individualism, secularism, commercialism and materialism. This industrialised world is no longer pastoral and poetic. Materialism has brought along with it, an attendant corruption and conflation of good and evil.

In the poem, many of the signifiers denoting premodern times also denote joy, satisfaction and clarity in distinguishing between good and evil. And the signifiers pointing to modern times denote sadness, dissatisfaction, staleness and muddled values. The signifiers are tabulated below (Table 2). The table is largely self-explanatory.

It must also be mentioned that there are a few signifiers from *premodern* times which serve as *models for the modern waste land* situation of death in life: Sybil has gained immortality sans youth; the Fisher king's impotence has rendered his entire kingdom sterile; Dante's Limbo. The title of the second section derives from two of Middleton's plays which denote manipulation and are set in premodern times: *A Game of Chess* and *Women Beware Women*. In the latter, a lady is distracted by 'a game of chess', so as to facilitate the rape of Bianca, her daughter-in-law. However, these signifiers are too few and far between to

compete with the sheer number of signifiers from premodernity signifying the positive qualities of fertility, clarity, sincerity and satisfaction. These premodern signifiers are the few exceptions and cannot be regarded as the rule.

Table 2: Paradigmatic Reading of *The Waste Land* based on the Contradiction of  
Premodernity vs Modernity

| <b><u>SIGNIFIED<br/>or CENTRAL<br/>CONTRADICTION</u></b><br>→ | <b>[Paradigm 1]<br/><u>PREMODERNITY =</u><br/><u>Positive Qualities</u></b><br>(Fertility, Clarity, Sincerity, Satisfaction)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | vs | <b>[Paradigm 2]<br/><u>MODERNITY =</u><br/><u>Negative Qualities</u></b><br>(Sterility, Confusion, Corruption, Dissatisfaction)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>SIGNIFIERS</u></b> ↑                                    | April in Chaucer's time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | vs | April in modern time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                               | Cleopatra's undiluted prosperity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | vs | The staleness of the modern woman's wealth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                               | Divine people such as St. Augustine, Buddha, Tiresias, clairvoyants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | vs | Corruption even among the 'divine': Madame Sosostris                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                               | <u>Relations between the sexes were sincere and sacrificial:</u> Hamlet and Ophelia, Ferdinand and Miranda, Tristan and Isolde.<br><br><u>Emphasis on the sacredness of marriage and chastity before marriage:</u> Philomel transfigured to transcend her loss of chastity; the river nymphs in Spenser's poems heralded a wedding; Diana was the goddess of chastity; even the flirtatious Elizabeth wanted to get married. <sup>2</sup> | vs | <u>Relations between the sexes have become corrupt:</u> typist and clerk, Mrs. Porter, Mr. Eugenides.<br><br><u>Marriage has become dissatisfying and chastity is no longer a virtue:</u> the marital relations of Lil and Albert and of the upper class couple has become stale and sterile in different ways; modern nymphs are involved in an orgy; Mrs. Porter is the 'goddess' of promiscuousness |
|                                                               | East- a symbol of ancient spirituality and pastoral goodness (signified by Buddha and the Sanskrit injunctions of the thunder)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | vs | West- a centre of modern materialism and corruption (signified by London, Mr. Eugenides and Mrs. Porter)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

### Textual Analysis: Contradiction between Life and Death

I borrow the second main contradiction, that between life and death, from Cleanth Brooks. In his essay "Critique of the Myth", Brooks identifies a major "paradox" in the theme of the poem: "Life devoid of meaning is death; sacrifice, even the sacrificial death,

<sup>2</sup> For Elizabeth's intentions of marriage, see Eliot's note to line 279 In *The Waste Land*.

may be life-giving, an awakening to life” (60). If we equate his use of the term ‘sacrifice’ to ‘meaning’, we can appropriate it for a Straussian paradigmatic reading of *The Waste Land*. ‘Meaning’ can be used as a variable to qualify the paradigms of life and death.

How can ‘meaning’ be used to qualify life and death? ‘Meaning’ can be a signifier for positive qualities of sincerity, fertility, clarity, satisfaction and so on. Both the entities of death and life can either possess or not possess meaning. Death becomes meaningful (+ meaning) when it is sacrificial, for eg. the death of Christ. Suffering in/for love can also become a situation of a death with meaning. Death becomes meaningless (- meaning), when it lacks sacrifice. What is a situation of life without meaning? Any situation which is traditionally associated with prosperity and happiness can be considered as a situation of life, for eg. marriage, spring season, wealth and riches. Therefore situations of life without meaning (-meaning), can be marriage without joy, spring without vitality, wealth without happiness etc. From these statements, it becomes clear that life and meaning are synonymous. Therefore life with meaning (+ meaning) is a kind of ‘life plus’. Any of the life situations described above can be life with meaning, when it is enjoyed to its fullest. Thus, I can derive four paradigms from Brook’s statement to settle the contradiction between life and death:

*Paradigm 1:* Life + Meaning = Life undiluted LIFE

*Paradigm 2:* Death + Meaning = Life

*Paradigm 3:* Life – Meaning = Death

*Paradigm 4:* Death – Meaning = Death undiluted DEATH

There is a gradation from paradigm 1 to 4. It progresses from ‘pure life’ to ‘pure death’ with the intermediary paradigms of ‘death with meaning’ and ‘life without meaning’. What is the difference between these two intermediary paradigms? Death connotes something negative, both life and meaning connote something positive. In paradigm 2, the negative aspect of death is reduced by the positive aspect of meaning, to yield an ultimately positive entity, life. But in paradigm 3, the positive aspect of life is not enough to mute the negative arising from a lack of meaning. Thus it ultimately results in a negative entity, death.

Unlike Levi-Strauss’ paradigmatic reading of a myth where there exists a component of time, the various signifiers in the *The Waste Land* are unrelated in time, (except that some signify premodernity and others modernity). Therefore, instead of syntagms, I choose a set of paradigms for the horizontal axis also<sup>3</sup>. I base these horizontal paradigms - earth images, game images, fire images, water images and thunder images - on the titles of the sections in

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<sup>3</sup> The method of Levi-Strauss’ paradigmatic reading of myths is appropriated from Roman Jakobson’s twin axes . In Jakobson’s scheme, the horizontal axis is assigned for syntagms. See Jakobson’s “Linguistics and Poetics” and “Two Aspects”

*The Waste Land*. I also include one horizontal paradigm for beings who are very important signifiers in the poem – Tiresias, Sybil etc.

Incidentally, the titles of four of the sections obviously correspond to the four classical elements in Western astrology: earth, fire, water and air<sup>4</sup>. If at all, it is only with regard to the final section ‘What the Thunder Said’, that the connection has to be slightly stretched. But, even here thunder has obvious contiguous relations with air. Also, the four classical elements are supposed to correspond to the four suits in divinatory tarot, which is also signified in the text of the poem, by Madame Sosostris.

What about the title of the second section: ‘A Game of Chess’? It would be difficult to imagine T.S.Eliot - a scholar in Sanskrit - as being unaware of the concept of *maya* in Sanskrit philosophy. *Maya* approximately translates as a ‘cosmic delusion’ arising from the ‘play’ of the elements. Thus by a stretch of logic, the four-element titles can be connected to the title, ‘game’.

Having identified horizontal and vertical paradigms from the poem, we can derive a matrix (Table 3), for all the various images or signifiers in the poem. (Only the entries which require explanation are described henceforth.)

**Earth Images:** Cities are paragons of human engineering on earth’s surface and are supposed to be exemplars of life. However, they have either become ‘unreal’ or have begun to ‘fall’- symptoms of lack of meaning. The loss of consciousness (death) in the hyacinth garden (earth image) falls within paradigm 2. It was induced by a vision of beauty (meaning) - the hyacinth girl with her wet hair and full arms.

The title of the first section denotes a fertility cult based on burial. In premodern times, vitality (meaning) was restored to sterile lands (death) by the burial and eventual unearthing of effigies of gods. This burial cult is also hinted at, in the lines “That corpse you planted . . . / has it begun to sprout? . . . “ (71-2). The myth of the Fisher King is the source for the basic wasteland symbol. In the myth, fertility is restored to the sterile Fisher King and his kingdom (death) by the knight who deciphers the ‘meaning’ of the symbols in the castle. King Anfortas’ land was on the banks of a river and so the myth of his land is alluded to in the references to fishing - “Fishing, with the *arid plain* behind me/ Shall I at least set *my lands* in order?” (my emphasis) (424-5).

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<sup>4</sup> In Indian theory, there are five classical elements or *panchamahabhutas* : earth (*prithvi*), water (*jala*), fire (*agni*), air (*vayu*) and ether (*akasha*).

**Game Images:** The title of the second section brings to mind many games (life). Games can signify either innocent fun (+ meaning) or manipulation (- meaning). Among the signifiers for the former, is that played between Miranda and Ferdinand in Shakespeare's *Tempest* (Act 5, Scene 1). Brooks has identified the relationship between the title and Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (70). However, here it is played with the aim of deceit - the game is played with the old woman to distract her from the rape of her daughter-in-law, Bianca.

In the above instances games of chess are literally played. Games can also be played metaphorically. Many signifiers in the poem denote games played between the sexes within marriage and courtship: the woman of the lower classes, Lil, is trying to outwit her husband by making herself a "bit smart" (line 142) using false teeth ; the woman from the upper classes enters into a game of repartee or stichomythia with her husband (111-138); in the third section, there is a reference to the relationship between Elizabeth and Leicester, which is a flirtatious game in itself (279-80). In these situations, 'game' is a metaphor and it accrues connotations of 'guile' or 'manipulation' as in the common usage - 'Don't play games with me.' It is no longer the innocent playfulness of Ferdinand and Miranda. Brooks quotes John Crowe Ransom in this regard - "Love is the aesthetic of sex; lust is the science"(68). In the above instances, the relationships involve 'scientific' calculations and planning of moves. They lack the innocence of pure love. Since, these guileful games (- meaning) are played in marriage and courtship (life), they become signifiers for paradigm 3 (life- meaning).

The literal rape and game in Middleton, can be metaphorically extended to the rape of Philomel. However, she transcends the game played against her (rape), by becoming a nightingale. Here the metaphorical game of rape is 'death'. 'Meaning' is added to this death, by Philomel's transformation.

**Fire Images:** Both the Buddha and St . Augustine use the image of fire to denote lust. It is induced that the 'fires' of the mind can lead to either a "*sterile* burning of lust " (emphasis added) (Brooks 70) or a sacrificial burning, to derive a glorious, *incandescent* flame. Buddha and St. Augustine are asking their followers to do the latter - kill or immolate the fires of passion to gain life. This is a meaningful killing or death.



Table 3: Paradigmatic Reading of *The Waste Land* based on the  
Contradiction of Life vs Death

| <b><u>SIGNIFIED<br/>or CENTRAL<br/>CONTRADICTION →</u></b> |                               | <b><u>LIFE</u></b>               |                                                                           | <b><u>vs</u></b>                                                                                                                                  | <b><u>DEATH</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>VERTICAL<br/>PARADIGMS →</b>                            |                               | <b>1.<br/>LIFE +<br/>MEANING</b> | <b>2.<br/>DEATH +<br/>MEANING</b>                                         | <b>3.<br/>LIFE --<br/>MEANING</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>4.<br/>DEATH --<br/>MEANING</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b><u>SIGNIFIERS →</u></b>                                 | <b>HORIZONTAL PARADIGMS →</b> | <b>EARTH IMAGES</b>              |                                                                           | <p>The hyacinth garden</p> <p>The fertility cults<br/>(burial and<br/>resurrection of gods)<br/>- sprouting corpses</p> <p>Fisher king's land</p> | <p>The 'dead land' in<br/>April</p> <p>'Unreal cities'-<br/>London,<br/>Baudelaire's Paris,<br/>Dante's Limbo</p> <p>Fall of cities –<br/>Athens, Jerusalem,<br/>Vienna</p>                                                                                                | <p>The waste lands from<br/>the Bible – 'heap of<br/>broken images'</p> <p>Rat's alley with dead<br/>men's bones</p> <p>The waterless rocks</p>                                                       |
|                                                            |                               | <b>GAME IMAGES<br/>(Maya ?)</b>  | <p>Game as innocent fun -<br/>Chess between Ferdinand<br/>and Miranda</p> | <p>Game as<br/>manipulation -<br/>Philomel outwits the<br/>'game'(rape) played<br/>against her, by<br/>transforming into a<br/>nightingale</p>    | <p>Game as<br/>manipulation -<br/>chess game used<br/>to hide the rape of<br/>Bianca</p> <p>'Games' in<br/>marriage: the rich<br/>woman and her<br/>husband, the poor<br/>woman and her<br/>husband</p> <p>Flirtatious 'games'<br/>between Elizabeth<br/>and Leicester</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                            |                               | <b>FIRE IMAGES</b>               |                                                                           | <p>The 'fires' of passion<br/>have to be immolated<br/>- the basic message<br/>of the sermons by<br/>Buddha and St.<br/>Augustine</p>             | <p>The relationship<br/>between Elizabeth<br/>and Leicester</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>The sexual encounters<br/>between the city<br/>nymphs and directors</p> <p>Mr. Eugenides' visits<br/>to Metropole for sex</p> <p>The sexual encounter<br/>between the typist and<br/>the clerk</p> |
|                                                            |                               | <b>WATER<br/>IMAGES</b>          | <p>Sweet Thames from<br/><i>Prothalamion</i></p>                          | <p>The fertility cults<br/>(drowning and<br/>revivification of<br/>gods)</p> <p>Eyes to pearls image<br/>from <i>Tempest</i></p>                  | <p>The 'dull canal'<br/>of the Fisher King</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>The modern river – a<br/>site of orgy</p> <p>The drowning of<br/>Phlebas, the merchant</p>                                                                                                         |

|  |  |                                      |  |                                                                               |       |  |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--|
|  |  | <b>THUNDER<br/>IMAGE<br/>(Air ?)</b> |  | Die to the little self -<br>the intervention of<br>the Upanishadic<br>thunder |       |  |
|  |  | <b>BEINGS</b>                        |  | Tiresias, Christ                                                              | Sybil |  |

However, the people in the modern day wasteland are burning away their lust in sterile sexual encounters. Why are these sexual encounters sterile and not plainly evil? Because none of the characters involved have any sense of guilt or regret. The remorse in an act of sexual transgression lends a ‘meaning’ to the otherwise damned act. Brooks quotes from Eliot’s essay “Baudelaire”: “. . . . the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the natural, ‘life-giving,’ cheery automatism of the modern world . . . . So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good ” (61). Thus the sterile sexual encounters of the people in the waste land is death multiplied – the acts are morally wrong or damned *and* the participants are without guilt. They are signifiers for paradigm 4. After having sexual intercourse with the clerk, the typist is described as smoothening her hair with an “automatic hand” (line 255) and nonchalantly putting a record in to the gramophone (256).

The reference to Queen Elizabeth and Leicester (line 279) at once recalls their flirtatiousness and insincerity. However, Eliot seems to justify Elizabethan flirtations as being better than the sordidness of modern day lovers or paradigm 4, since they did have intentions of getting married<sup>5</sup>. Since, there is some intention of marriage (life), I place this signifier not in paradigm 4, but in paradigm 3.

**Water Images:** *The Waste Land* is awash with images denoting water. The activities on the banks of the modern river are contrasted with those on the banks of the river Thames during Spenser’s times. The modern ‘nymphs’ are involved in an orgy (death - meaning), while Spenser’s nymphs had been celebrating a marriage (pure life). The fertility cult hinted in the title ‘Death by Water’ and Ariel’s song -- “Those were pearls that were his eyes”(“Waste Land” line 124) – are death-with-meaning signifiers. Ariel is reminding

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<sup>5</sup> See Eliot’s note to line 279.

Ferdinand of his father's death and how his eyes had converted to pearl or coral. The death of Phlebas, the merchant, lacks meaning because he refused to sacrifice – he was concerned about “profit and loss” (314).

**Thunder Image:** By asking the wastelanders to give (*datta*), to sympathise (*dayadhvam*) and to control one's self (*damyata*), the thunder is asking them to negate (die/kill) their little self, awaken the Self and gain life. This is a signifier for paradigm 2.

**BEINGS:** Both Tiresias and Christ denote death with meaning. The blindness of Tiresias, (a kind of death) is compensated by his divine vision (meaning). Christ was crucified (death) as a sacrifice (meaning). They are contrasted with Sybil who has immortal ‘life’, but lacks youth which gives it meaning.

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