

LILACS AND HYACINTHS: TWO SYMBOLS OF SADNESS IN T.S. ELIOT'S 'THE WASTE LAND'

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Abstract. Several flowers are referred to in T. S. Eliot's poems which are used symbolically. The article "Lilacs and Hyacinths: Two Symbols of Sadness in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*" deals with research of symbolic meanings of the floristic imagery in the major poem by T. S. Eliot. The notion of the symbol with reference to modernism is unusual and polemic, so the authors examine the structure and essence of modernist symbols that evoke deep and unconscious responses in the reader focusing on terminological and theoretical aspects of the problem. Historical and archetypal approaches have been used to interpret and explore the meanings of lilacs and hyacinths in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The analytical survey has been carried out to demonstrate the peculiar use of two flowers mentioned in *The Waste Land*. Data were gathered from the text of the poem and from theoretical and historical sources. The important research goals were to find out if the two flowers have been used symbolically and differ from each other. For each flower its symbolic and common meanings that have been explored in different contexts of the poem (historical, biographical, mythological, cultural, anthropological, etc.). The international research team (Iraq, Russia) have also tried to take into account the challenges of teaching English modernist poetry to the international students in the age of global education.

Keywords: T.S. Eliot; 'The Waste Land'; modernist symbol; mythologeme of rebirth; floristic imagery in poetry; hyacinths; lilacs.

СИРЕНЬ И ГИАЦИНТ: ДВА СИМВОЛА ПЕЧАЛИ В «БЕСПЛОДНОЙ ЗЕМЛЕ» Т.С. ЭЛИОТА

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Аннотация. В поэзии Т. С. Элиота встречается целый ряд цветов, которые могут быть интерпретированы символически. В статье «Сирень и гиацинт: два символа печали в „Бесплодной земле“ Т. С. Элиота» исследуется символика образов цветов в одной из самых значительных поэм Т. С. Элиота. Само понятие символ по отношению к модернизму может вызвать полемику, поэтому авторы статьи уделяют внимание изучению структуры и природы модернистского символа, вызывающего у читателя глубокие и бессознательные реакции, обращаясь к терминологическим и теоретическим аспектам проблемы. Для интерпретации и анализа символика сирени и гиацинтов в поэме Элиота применялись, прежде всего, историко-литературный и архетипический подходы. В ходе анализа была выявлена неоднозначность и оригинальность семантики двух цветов в «Бесплодной земле». Материалом исследова-

ния послужили как поэтические тексты, так и теоретические и историко-литературные работы. Одной из важных задач также было выяснение сходства и различия символических уровней и соответствий того и другого флористического образа. Символическое и универсальное значение каждого из цветов рассматривалось в различных контекстах (исторический, биографический, мифологический, культурный, антропологический и т. д.). Международный исследовательский коллектив (Ирак, Россия) также принимал во внимание трудности преподавания английской поэзии модернизма в иноязычной среде в эпоху глобального образования.

Ключевые слова: Т. С. Элиот; «Бесплодная земля»; модернистский символ; мифологема смерти-возрождения; флористические образы в поэзии; гиацинты, сирень.

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Introduction. There are different critical approaches to study and interpret the mythic and symbolic elements in the works of European literature. First, they need to be analyzed, interpreted and explained for educational purposes throughout the world at different levels of education and in different cultural contexts. Second, the archetypal or symbolic framework of the texts created in different cultures may in a special way cause the different analytical methods. There are some challenges for researching and teaching world literature in the situation of internationalization and globalization of education. In addition to broadening students' perspectives by introducing them to different literary traditions the scholars and teachers can also share with them ideas and values from other cultures. One of the advantages of such cultural polyphony can result in the development of new analytical methods, critical concepts and text interpretations.

Thus, there is a sense to turn to literary theories and ideas produced by different critical schools. One of the most productive methodologies for interpreting and understanding the mythological imagery in works of literature was achieved in mythical and archetypal criticism. The important methodological instruments have been elaborated by the Russian school of Historical Poetics starting with the works by Alexander Veselovsky (1838–1906) who has supplied the theoretical basis for the work of such Russian theorists and historians of Literature as Olga Freidenberg, Mikhail Bakhtin, Yeleazar Meletinsky,

Sergey Averintsev, Mikhail Gasparov and others. In the West Mythological and Archetypal critical theorists like Maud Bodkin and Northrop Frye contributed the studies of myth and archetypes in literary narratives. For instance, in 1963 fifteen critics have explored various interpretations through studies of myth and symbol in the collection of critical essays "*Myth and Symbol. Critical Approaches and Applications*" dedicated to Northrop Frye (who was one of the authors). The editor of this publication Bernice Slote mentioned in the Foreword: "Myth, both traditional and creative is the narrative form of those particularly archetypal symbols which together make a coherent revelation of what man knows and what he believes. In its doubleness, myth is vision objectified; it exists in terms of what is deepest in the springs of human feeling and perception" [Slote 1963: v].

The aim of this paper is to understand the peculiarities of modernist symbolic imagery in T. S. Eliot's poem "*The Waste Land*" (1922) referring to different sources and critical approaches. Perhaps one reason behind the difficulty of modern poetry belongs to use of words that can give other meanings (indirect meanings) that students and ordinary readers cannot understand easily. The authors of the paper have paid particular attention to the symbolic uses of two images and their deeper meanings in Eliot's poem "*The Waste Land*". This study could be helpful for the international students studying English literature.

Lilacs and hyacinths in Eliot's poetry have already been the objects of critical analysis by different scholars (Northrop Frye, Grover Smith,

Marianne Thormahlen and others)¹. Our paper is an attempt to integrate and summarize the results of previous relevant studies and accumulate some new ideas and approaches.

Eliot named several flowers in his poetry such as *geranium*, *nasturtium*, *primrose*, *dahlia*, *hawthorn*, *lavender*, *delphinium*, *cowslip*, *daffodils*, *lotus*, *roses* (including paper roses) and other flowers with different meaning, implication. Symbolic correspondences and in different contexts. There is some dynamic movement in the degrees of symbolization and transformation of functions of flower imagery employed throughout Eliot's poetry. In his early poetry flowers can be presented as an element of ekphrastic description (*nasturtium* in "*Suppressed Complex*", 1915)² or a direct correspondence (objective correlative) for certain emotional mood (a dead *geranium* in "*Rhapsody on a Windy Night*", 1917)³. In "*The Waste Land*" Eliot employs multidimensional palimpsestic symbolic images with a complex system of allusive references and cultural codes. In his later poetry flowery vision becomes more allegoric and esoteric: "As a religious symbol, the rose represents divinity, sanctity, and virtue; it is an image of final attainment or perfection; it is synonymous with miracles and portents; it suggests fecundity in the physical and spiritual orders. In Christianity, it represents Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and various saints; in Eastern religions, it is closely related to the lives of the prophets and demi-gods. Whether regarded as esoteric, cabalistic, or divinely-revealed, the religion in which it appears uses it as a figure or reminder of the ultimate" [Coleman 1960: 62].

Two different types of flowers (*lilacs* and *hyacinths*) have been symbolically alluded to in "*The Waste Land*". Although they are two different types of flowers their symbolic meanings intersect and complement in the text. A consideration of symbolic levels of flower images should at least seem appropriate in view of the traditional mythopoeitic and individual myth of the author. Floral im-

agery is an important cluster of Eliot's vegetation mythology. Examination of Eliot's symbolic imagery arises a lot of theoretical and literary-historical questions. One of the most important issues of this study is a terminological problem. Could we regard these flowery images as symbols? If they are symbols what kind of symbolism or symbolic was used here? A prominent Swedish scholar Marianne Thormahlen put these questions in her brilliant monograph "*The Waste Land. A Fragmentary Wholeness*": "The conventional idea of the symbol as a simple denotative replacement of something else, the nature of which is generally recognized, is hardly ever workable with regard to Eliot's poetry (or, for that matter to the French symbolists with whom he has points in common). But his poetry can be designated as 'symbolic' by other criteria <...>" [Thormahlen 1978: 117-118]. In her monograph Professor Thormahlen presents and interprets various degrees and levels of symbolization in Eliot's works. Following her research logics it would be interesting to investigate different areas of symbolic relations and meanings of two flowers (*lilacs* and *hyacinths*) in "*The Waste Land*".

The textual approach is helpful here to analyze the text of the poem in its various contexts. It is productive to classify different types of symbolization in the poem: "*general*" (universal, historical), "*cultural*" (mythological, archetypal, literary, artistic) and "*private*" (connected to biographical facts and personal emotions). To know and understand how these two flowers are used both symbolically and mythologically is quite essential for the readers of the poem. There will be some references to the traditional symbolic uses of *lilacs* and *hyacinths*, literary sources, anthropological works, biographical episodes, etc.

Lilacs and Hyacinths in the Text of "The Waste Land"

The first lines of the poem contain the important flower image (Part One. "The Burial of the Dead"):
April is the cruellest month, breeding

¹ The authors of the paper turned to the problem of flowery imagery in their works. See: Barzinji, Mariwan Nasradeen Hasan. *The Image of Modern Man in T. S. Eliot's Poetry*. Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2012; Barzinji, Mariwan Nasradeen Hasan. Modernism, Modernity and Modernisation. In: *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. 3.12 (2013); Barzinji, Mariwan Nasradeen Hasan, Latef S. N. Berzenji. Spiritual Dilemma in Eliot's Four Quartets. In: *International Review of Social Sciences*. 5: 1 (2017); Ушакова О. М. Т.С. Элиот и европейская культурная традиция. Тюмень: Издательство Тюменского университета, 2005, etc.

² See: Ushakova O. M. Invitation to the Dance: Intermedial Allusions in T. S. Eliot's Early Poetry ("The Death of Saint Narcissus", "Suppressed Complex"). In: *Philological Class*. 2019. № 1 (55). P. 136–143. DOI: 10.26170/flk19-01-20.

³ See: Ricks, Christopher. Commentary. In: *The Poems of T.S. Eliot*. Vol. 1. Collected and Uncollected Poems. Ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue. London: Faber and Faber, 2015. P. 420–421.

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
(“The Waste Land” LL. 1-4) [Eliot 2015: 55].

The other flowers depicted in the same part
of the poem are hyacinths.
“You gave me Hyacinths first a year ago;
They called me the hyacinth girl.
– Yet when we came back, late,
from the hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence”.
(“The Waste Land” LL. 35-41) [Eliot 2015: 56].

Lilacs and Hyacinths as Mythopoetical Symbols. The information on traditional mythopoetical semantics of these two flowers is presented in many sources: encyclopedias, mythological dictionaries, collections of Greek myths, books on flowers, internet blogs, etc.¹ There is some data necessary for understanding the classical ancient and European legendary roots of lilacs and hyacinth semantics implicitly accompanying the flower images in Eliot's poem.

Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) is a type of a flower from the family of Oleaceae². It has its own story in Greek mythology. In Greek mythology the god of forests Pan was forlornly in love with Syringa, a nymph. Once Pan was following her in a wood, she was fearful of his advancements. She was obliged to turn herself into a lilac tree to disguise herself. Pan believed that he cannot find her, but surprisingly, he found the tree, owing to the hollow reeds of the lilac tree. After cutting the reeds he made the ‘first pan pipe’. Its scientific name was derived from the Greek word “syrinks” which means pipe. The meaning of lilac in Spanish and French is the same as lilac but in Arabic, it is called ‘*lilak*’. ‘The word lilac refers to the light purple color of its flowers’ The Russian word “*syren*” keeps the Greek mythological origin in.

In each culture and period, the meanings of lilac vary: owing to its intoxicating fragrance the Celts consider lilacs “magical”. During the Victorian Age widows were often wearing lilacs as a reminder of an old love. Whereas in Russia people believe that holding a branch of ‘lilac over the newborn’ is the source of wisdom. Finally, in the United States it shows the ‘hardy’ nature of New Hampshire people³.

Lilacs are in different colors. White lilacs are the symbols of innocence, violet is the symbol of spirituality, the blue ones are symbols of happiness and tranquility, Magenta lilacs are the symbols of love and passion and lilacs which has a light purple color symbolizes first love⁴.

A hyacinth (*Hyacinthus*) is from the Asparagaceae family. It dates back to Greek mythology where the tragic hero, Hyakinthos who was the lover of Apollo. Hyakinthos was the prince of Sparta. Being handsome and young charmed Apollo among other gods. During training Apollo hit his discus at Hyakinthos on the head and this caused his death. It is mostly assumed that the death of Hyakinthos was the other gods. Probably it was Zephyr, the god of wind who killed him due to his jealousy. Apollo did not allow death claim Hyakinthos' body, because of being extremely furious, ‘from the drops of blood from the young man's head, Apollo sprung them onto the earth and there blossomed the flower of Hyacinth, known today as the Larkspur flower’⁵.

The parallels between the plots of classical myths and one of the key themes of the poem (the motifs of unhappy love, suffering, sadness, death and metamorphoses of young beautiful people, etc.) are obvious. As Thormahlen mentioned: “However, the Hyacinth story has other properties relevant to ‘*The Waste Land*’: the connotation of frustrated desire and grief at the loss of the beloved. It is a tragedy of which a memento remains in the flower. Hence, Eliot's hyacinths touched with sadness and longing, quite consistent with the tenor of the passage” [Thormahlen 1978: 144].

¹ We used different sources both English and Russian among them: Золотницкий Н. Ф. Цветы в легендах и преданиях. М.: Фирма «Т-Око», 1992; Тахо-Годи А. Гиацинф // Мифы народов мира. Энциклопедия: в 2 томах. М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1988. Т. 1. С. 300–301; Топоров В. Растения // Мифы народов мира. Энциклопедия: в 2 томах. М.: Советская энциклопедия, 1988. Т. 2. С. 368–371, etc.

² www.swansonnursery.com/blog/pruning-lilacs.

³ www.ftd.com/blog/share/lilac-meaning-and-symbolism.

⁴ www.ftd.com/blog/share/lilac-meaning-and-symbolism.

⁵ tseliotsthewasteland.fandom.com/wiki/Hyacinths.

Anthropological Dimensions: Eliot's Garden Vision and Rebirth Pattern. The mythological roots of lilacs and hyacinths connect these flower images to vegetation deities, gods associated with death and resurrection. Thus, these flower images refer to vegetation ceremonies and rituals and the Rebirth Pattern. Among the mythological images of the first part of the poem embodying the theme of death and rebirth there is one more character connected to Hyacinth. This is Sibyl ("I will show you horror in a handful of ashes"). Both these mythological characters are united not only by the fact that they were the beloved of Apollo in Greek mythology. Both images are associated with the mythology of fertility. Virgil and Ovid have associated the Cumaean Sibyl with the motive of the Golden Bough which according to James Frazer, was considered in many mythologies to be a "repository of life". Thus, the characters of Greek myths well known to the reader from the works of ancient poets organically fit into the general paradigm of "death-resurrection".

In lines 35–37 hyacinths appear in three variants: "Hyacinth" as the name with a capital letter, "the hyacinth garden" and "the hyacinth girl". Hyacinth is an ancient vegetation deity of dying and resurrecting nature for whom the "hyacinthia" holidays were celebrated in spring. In the tenth book of "Metamorphoses" Ovid notes this characteristic perception of Hyacinth as an "April" deity of the resurrected nature:

*"Te quoque, Amyclide, posuisset in aethere Phoebus,
tristiasispatiumponendi fata de dissent.
qua licet, aeternustamen es, quotiens querepellit
ver hiemem, Piscique Aries succedit aquoso,
tutotiensorerisviridique in caespite flores"*

(P. Ovidi Nasonis. "Metamorphoseon".

Liber 10. LL.162-166) [P. Ovidi http].

In this context, the "hyacinth garden" and the "hyacinth girl" can be identified with the spring "gardens of Adonis" and "the daughters" of Hyacinth [Грейвс 1992: 238–239].

In the next episode (Madame Sosostris divination scene, LL. 43–59) the symbolic series of images associated with the death-resurrection theme expands. The "Hanged Man" and "Phoenician Sailor" while not specific mythological characters belong to certain archetypes described by anthropologists. The Hanged God was one of the most important characters in fertility rituals. The "Golden Bough" describes various options for put-

ting the "man-god" (a ruler, priest, sacrifice, etc.) to death. Such sacrifices were made usually for the sake of increasing the fertility of the earth. Burton Blistein in his monograph "The Design of The Waste Land" also states that the name of the "Hyacinth garden" was derived from "Hyacinthus – a type of hanged God" [Blistein 2008: 11]. So, the images of lilacs and hyacinths should be considered in the context of anthropological ideas of Frazer and Jessie Weston stating by Eliot as a major influence on the philosophic concept of the poem. Northrop Frye mentions that this ritualistic flower images based on anthropological ideas of the time appears in other Eliot's poems: "In these rites a red or purple flower was associated with the god's blood: this appears in the hyacinths of "The Waste Land" and perhaps the "belladonna" or deadly nightshade (as well in the dogwood and judas of "Gerontion", the lilacs of "Ash Wednesday", and elsewhere). The death of Adonis was mourned by women representing the spirit of the earth, and the line "Murmuring of maternal lamentation" associates this with the Biblical weeping of Rachel" [Frye 1963: 65-66].

The content of these "ritualistic" episodes (LL. 19-42) is not limited to the themes of "death in life" ("spiritual death") and "eroticism" ("carnal passion") noted by researchers [Актавацаров 2000: 165-168]. The narrative is more universal, objectified, impersonal corresponding to the legends on Sibyl, Hyacinth, Tristan and Isolde, etc. The stony ground from which branches stretch ("What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow out of this stony rubbish?") is the source of love and death, decay and life at the same time. Mythological and literary plots, musical themes, stories and memories, etc. merge in a single stream of being with endless repetitions, alternations of darkness and light, decline and rebirth, organic coexistence of lifeless dust and spring flowers, etc., not opposed, but interconnected, inseparable from each other. The time of the "waste land" has dragged on but this stagnation and decadence are not able to disrupt the basic rhythms of the world order, in which death is a necessary condition for continuation of life.

Lilacs and Hyacinths as Literary Allusions.

Many researchers considered the image of lilacs in connection to Walt Whitman's famous poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom's" (1865), an elegy for an American president Abraham Lin-

coln. Nancy Dafoe believes that lilacs Eliot used in the poem have a strong connection to Whitman's poem in which he refers to lilac flowers like a 'symbol of rebirth' [Dafoe 2013: 109]. Dafoe asserts that Eliot's flowers are not the symbols of birth and beauty but rather the symbols of the inability of rebirth. These two flowers are not the symbols of happiness and rebirth but they are rather the symbols of melancholy, sadness, and desolation because when the poet remembers the people died during the Great War, he becomes quite sad. The poet can't love the month of April because of the blood of those people who died and transformed making April so green and beautiful.

The sadness about the flowers is that they cannot regrow because the land has been already destroyed and there is no hope for the rebirth. Perhaps, the only hope Eliot has is in the hereafter life as people will be resurrected. Lilacs as Harold Bloom argues has little to do with the death of Lincoln but it has to do with the ability of Whitman as a poet which ceased to continue as before [Bloom 2007: 4]. One more important literary source influenced the tragic and epitaphic character of lilacs was mentioned by many researchers (B. C. Southam, Ch. Ricks, etc.). That was "*The Old Vicarage, Grantchester*" (1912), a poem by Rupert Brooke, an English poet and hero of the Great War died in April, 1915.

It is curious that Eliot used "hyacinths" and "hair" in one stanza. "*Hyacinth curls*" could be defined as one of the oldest metaphoric adjectives synonymous to "*beautiful*" used in poetry since Homer. Hyacinths like lilacs were quite popular and much in vogue in the arts and literature of the *fin de siècle*. There are numerous examples of these flower images in poetry and arts (impressionists, symbolists, imagists, etc.). Thormahlen draws an interesting parallel between "the hyacinth girls" by August Strindberg ("*The Ghost Sonata*", 1908) and Eliot: "The points of contact between Eliot's and Strindberg's hyacinth girls are so striking that it is difficult to shake them off as being coincidental" [Thormahlen 1978: 144].

It should be mentioned that "hyacinth lines" follow two "musical" episodes: the ballet and opera scenes. Distinguished American scholars

Jewel Brooker and Joseph Bentley noted that "the drama of the hyacinth girl and her love is enclosed by two passages from Richard Wagner's romantic opera '*Tristan and Isolde*' functioning as *parergon* or framing device [Brooker; Bentley 1990: 69]. It should be mentioned that the opera episode follows the scene alluded to the ballet "*Narcisse*" the main hero of which is also the mythological personage turned into a flower (*a daffodil*). The lines 26–29 of "*The Waste Land*" are the first five lines of the poem "*The Death of Saint Narcissus*" (1915). The imagery of this poem could be influenced by a ballet-dancer Vatslav Nijinsky as a Narcisse in Nikolay Cherepnin's ballet "*Narcisse*" (1911) with Leon Bakst's decorations. It could be assumed that the image of a "*hyacinth girl*" in line 36 of "*The Waste Land*" whose image is usually interpreted in the Wagnerian context might be considered as the color reference to a famous Bakst's image of nymph Echo dressed in a purple tunic (known in artistic circles as "*a hyacinth girl*"). So, the flower images and main rebirth pattern of the "*The Waste Land*" are intertextually connected to the early Eliot's poems and the wide neo-mythological anthropological cultural context of the time. Thus, the images of lilacs and hyacinths in the poem contain numerous references to the artistic and literary contexts.

Lilacs and Hyacinths as "Private" Symbols. The reason Eliot says that the nicest month of the year (April) is '*the cruelest*' is that it reminds people of the war losses of so many people. Moreover, as George Monteiro says lilacs are always associated with "unhappiness, sadness, pain, and loss, evoking not only the fact that the scents of lilacs would remind him of Jean Verdenal, the friend who was killed at Gallipoli in May 1915 [Monteiro 2015: 33]. In 1934 Eliot witnessed about this connection between lilacs and his beloved friend recalling Verdenal passing across the Luxembourg Gardens with a branch of lilacs. The month of April is a beautiful one but because it reminds people of the death of the loved ones, people do not feel happy. The situation is turned upside down from a happy one to a sad one.

Lilacs are living flowers that will grow out of the dead land and this will remind the sad moments, although this moment itself is rather

¹ See: Ushakova O. M. Invitation to the Dance: Intermedial Allusions in T. S. Eliot's Early Poetry ("The Death of Saint Narcissus", 'Suppressed Complex'). In: Philological Class. 2019. № 1 (55). P. 136–143. DOI: 10.26170/fk19-01-20.

a happy moment. People who do not have the nostalgia of the past will feel happy in such situations as the environment turns green and the weather becomes better. Nevertheless, the sadness is triggered here due to the agony they have in their lives. The color of the lilac is mostly purple. This purple color is significant here because it is this color which is connected with the first love. The shallow meaning here is that it refers to the first love of the lovers who might also have lost their lives, whereas the deeper meaning is that the meaning is derived from the meaning of the purple color which is usually sadness.

James Miller points out that Eliot associated hyacinths with the male symbol or sexuality while some others believe that Eliot has connected hyacinths with females [Miller 2010: 71]. A distinguished T. S. Eliot scholar Grover Smith thinks that "Eliot diversified the pattern slightly, for a hyacinth is a male symbol, and, then, too, the quater himself has given the flowers to the hyacinth girl" [Smith 1967: 75]. Thormahlen noting that "the classic symbol of erotic and divine love" is invested "with a multitude of overtones" [Thormahlen 1978: 142] discusses such meanings as "nostalgia for homosexual love" and "the obsession with heterosexual frustration" [Thormahlen 1978: 143].

The images of flowers in the poem also could be connected with Emily Hale, the first love of the poet. The same flowers are depicted in the early poems (e.g., *lilacs* in "Portrait of a Lady", 1915) connected with "the sentimental education" of a young poet. It is interesting to mention that the image of Emily as a "flower lady" could be found in the correspondence of Eliot and Hale being introduced in public at the moment in the reports of an American scholar Francis Dickey in her blog¹. Thus, the lilacs and hyacinths could be regarded as the objective correlatives of complex and intimate inner drama of the author of the poem.

General Correspondences: Time and Mood.

According to the situation, it can be clear to the reader whether the particular flower the poet uses in the poem is to postulate sadness or happiness. It occurs when some sad incidents take place, they will change the implying meaning of the flower from happiness to sadness or vice versa. In "The Waste Land" everything revolves around

death, war, loss of innocence, destruction, corruption of people and nature, etc. Flowers have been used continuously for different purposes by poets: it might be religious for instance. It is not clear whether Eliot has used these two flowers with a religious purpose but hyacinth is definitely a symbol of the first love which will eventually change to a broken love of the hyacinth's girl.

Eliot has used the word "hyacinth" in his poem in one situation. It is the time that the girl who supposed to be in love with a young man reminding him of the hyacinth flower which he gave her as a token of love. Then she reminds him of how people referred to her as the "hyacinth girl". This situation shows that the young lady feels that the man does not intend to be loyal to her. He might leave her alone and therefore she is obliged to remind him of the experience they have together. When she talks about hyacinths with the lover, this indirectly reminds readers of their love which is now meaningless as her beloved one no longer wishes to be her lover. Hyacinth is a symbol of a hidden love that becomes the symbol of sad love eventually due to the disloyalty of the hero. It is a reference to Greek mythology: the killing of the innocent boy by the Greek God is similar to the murder of innocent people in "The Waste Land". So many deaths that Eliot describes remind the reader the death of the innocent classical hero. The spraying blood of the boy caused a new type of flower (*a hyacinth*) so it is in itself the symbol of rebirth but at the same time it reminds readers of a tragic situation, the happiness did not last long. Similarly, the blood of war victims made the environment green and vivid (LL. 35–40).

Perhaps lilacs that Eliot referred to in "The Waste Land" are the purple ones as they are symbols of the first love. The third line of the first stanza makes it obvious that lilacs of the second line could symbolize love through the word 'desire'. In general lilacs symbolize love but, in this context, it is the symbol of sadness and pessimism of the loss of innocent people including children and women during the First World War.

Flowers as the elements of the wasteland myth reveal the philosophic design of the total collapse and these flowers can't be used to describe the happy situation or circumstance of human beings. Lilacs and hyacinths symbolize two

¹ tseliotsociety.wildapricot.org/news.

different worlds; one is Eliot's own intimate life quite miserable and gloomy at that time and the other is the world of the epoch of Wars and Revolutions. Accordingly, it becomes clear that Eliot uses beautiful flowers to describe his hidden sadness. It could be said that these two worlds are equally full of dramatic events for the poet and all humanity like the ambiguous matter of flowers attractive and poisonous at the same time. Human beings when not involved in blood-shedding are also beautiful as flowers but when they started the world wars, their beauty and innocence disappear. References to spring in the poem may refer to death, pain, loneliness, despair or the end in these historical and individual contexts. The spring season provides the setting for the painful messages, as well as the messages of renewal, rebirth and hope.

Resume. To conclude, in "The Waste Land" Eliot demonstrates the innovative approaches in using symbols. The structure of a modernist symbol is highly complex, allusive, palimpsestic and

metareferential. The modernist symbols evoke deep, multidimensional and sometimes unconscious responses in a reader. The symbols in the modernist texts are open-ended leaving the possibilities of multiply new interpretations.

The lilacs and hyacinths in the poem symbolically embody universal meanings and basic human experiences. In "The Waste Land" the lilacs and hyacinths could be symbols of re-growth, rebirth, and happiness but Eliot also has used these images as the symbols of melancholy, desperation, and alienation. If Eliot used them with their traditional symbolic meanings obvious for the readers the poem could not be intriguing that whoever reads it, should read it twice to comprehend the hidden meaning which is always symbolic. Neither the blood of Hyacinthos grows Hyacinth flowers in the poem nor does the appearance of the lilacs bring happiness and tranquility to anyone. Eliot's lilacs and hyacinths are growing on the wasteland of modern epoch.

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