

THE VOICE OF THE THUNDER IN T. S. ELIOT'S THE WASTE LAND. A LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Anca Popescu

Assist., PhD, University of Bucharest

Abstract: The answer expected in The Waste Land, the rain from above, seems to be conditioned by the human accomplishment of a necessary three-fold commandment given by revelation. There has been a long debate in literary criticism whether the answer is of Hinduist/Buddhist or Christian origin or simply human wisdom and cultural background in the interpretation of the last part of the great modernist poem. We shall look into these aspects in detail through a close analysis of the literary text and its philosophical counterpart.

Keywords: cyclic regeneration, Resurrection, Logos, natural religions, super-natural restoration

There has been much discussion upon Eliot's religious inspiration in the fifth part of his great poem, *The Waste Land*, whether it was of Buddhist or Christian source. The whole poem shows humanity in a state of deep suffering and loss of meaning, consumed by its own burning passions and desires, hopeless like an inescapable sickness leading to death. Both in the Buddhist and the Christian thought human passions burn the soul and the entire human being. Not only in a religious sense, but also in a generally humanist philosophical context there are phrases like "a burning desire", "burning passion". Vices burn and distort human nature. In religion, both Buddhist and Christian, this is known as the fire of passion which corrupts the human. In the Buddhist religion man tries to avoid suffering and every moral sin in order to reach peace of soul and recover unity with the whole surrounding nature. This is the last stage of Buddhist perfection. In Christianity, the goal is far beyond nature and human powers and depends on the caring hand of God who draws man out of his own hell and extinguishes the fire of consuming passion, heals the wounds of the soul and restores human nature at a stage superior to its initial natural innocence. The perspective is wider and salvation from the endlessly consuming fire of passion means not just a step further, but a step beyond. Eliot wants to show that the need for purity is innate to humans and they have always longed for it. They tried to reach it especially by refraining from vices and keeping control over mind and heart. Buddhist practice recommended a natural peace. It knew no other.

However, the last lines of the poem represent a cry for help addressed to the Lord, the Christian God, the only one that can pluck the man out of his self-made hell. Thus, the Fire Sermon (the third part of the poem) is delivered by all the mythical characters and individuals of this text, both by those consumed by the burning fire, and mainly by Tyresias, in whose blind

eyes he sees and foresees the passion fire up to the end of time. Nevertheless, the way the Lord saved humanity was by suffering the opposite kind of Passion, the Sacrifice of absolute Love. He came down from heaven, that is, from above the fallen human nature, burning with the fire of Sacrifice. The Sacrifice is Jesus, Himself, and therefore it is only He that can save the corrupted nature of man. The last lines invoke his name. They are chosen from St. Augustine's *Confessions*, a saint that was saved from the fire of passion by the fire of divine grace. The final lines depict the icon of Christ's descent into hell, plucking Adam and Eve out of their graves and the whole humanity out of the flames of hell. Indeed, the Fire Sermon speaks of the human cry unto the Lord and of the Resurrection.

"The Waste Land" was ascribed many significances and was interpreted by means of ancient myths, especially the myth of fertility and the quest for the holy grail. They are suggested by Eliot himself in his *Notes*. The symbolism was partly inspired by the Grail legend presented by Jessie Weston's book and the Arthurian legends, as well as by Frazer's *The Golden Bough* with respect to the myths and rituals of fertility previous to Arthur's legends. For Eliot, they represent cultural layers and great intuitions of man's aspiration to regeneration. Besides the Buddhist tradition and thought, these myths remain enclosed in the cycles of nature. They do not break out of it. Therefore, Eliot includes them, picks out their symbols, and endows them with the full meaning of the Christian salvation. It points to regeneration beyond nature, to a restoration of the image and likeness of the Prototype and Creator, the divine Logos, in the human being. This short suggestion of a few ending lines will find explicit expression in many other later poems though mostly in the "The Rock".

For the moment, the Lord pluckest *me* out burning with the fire of sacrifice. The fire sermon speaks of Love in a world consumed by the fire of sheer sinful passion. The two kinds of fire are to be found later again in his poems. Everything is focused on the human person: the voices in the poem speak their different minds, and what happens to the individuals in the poem happens to the human ego in general, and to every one of us in particular. Therefore, the thought of avoiding or vanquishing death and the idea of regeneration are constitutive of any myth of any people and create various cultural patterns. However, for the European and American mind, baptized in the death and Resurrection of the Incarnate God, His restored and restoring Body and Blood does not just revive a dead world as it used to be or as it is remembered. He shows to the human being the deep possibility of transformation into what it is meant to become. The person is of the highest importance, in contrast to the myths of regeneration and fertility which aim at a world as it is, in full splendor of actual appearance. Eliot shows its perspective in Transfiguration. The ancient myths of regeneration and fertility and the religions promoting them may be expressions of the human aspiration for eternal life but under the nature's condition death. They do not find the way out of it to open the gates of Heaven. Christianity does. Thus, reading the poem backward and forward again, "Death by Water" (the fourth part of the poem) reminds us of the waters of this life that carries the sailor on its waves, yet also drowns him in the end. Water offers no redemption, nor does it help the skillful sailor. This life and one's skills offer no redemption. Water is the source of natural regeneration, be it mythical or not, and the symbol of life in every culture. However, the regeneration myths offer no solution to Phlebas, either. Thus we turn once again to the Old Testament prophetic writings. Besides the well-known suggestion to the symbolic Tarot pack of cards regarding Phlebas the Phoenician, Eliot opens large the gate of ancient history. Phlebas represents the metonymic character of human race that was once drowned in the Flood and is now drowned in the currents of this life. His bones are surrounded by the whispers of those who find him or pray for him, small voices of the water

currents, after a life of rising and falling, rising and falling again, repeatedly, a redundant, inescapable pattern of this life ending in death. The solution, therefore, should be looked for elsewhere, outside the waters of mythical cyclical regeneration and death. Eliot himself listens to what the Thunder said. The episode of the dead Phoenician sailor is the shortest of all the five parts of the poem. Its concentration and simplicity renders evident a fact of ordinary life that leaves place for no commentary or doubt. There is nothing else to say in human words. Therefore, Eliot turns his ear to the Thunder, a celestial voice coming from above. The tense of the verb in the title is not Present Tense. It is the Past. Not even Present Perfect. This does not mean that the voice of the Thunder does not speak to us today. It means that it once spoke for all eternity, for all of us. It could be heard mainly over the waters of the Genesis, and again, on the waters of Christian baptismal restoration. It is the voice of God in the highest, yet in a hidden form, in the Old Testament manner of the prophets, like in the burning bush where the unseen God talked to Moses. As a matter of fact, this waiting for rain, the human waiting for redemption from death and restoration of life, not yet accomplished in the fragment, represents the main theme of the poem. The expected, still not open arrival of the eternal water of life that is announced to come, and its invisible God speaking in the Thunder, in a similar manner as in the burning bush, together with all its prophetic voices in expectation of the actual arrival in full revelation of His visible Incarnation (that is going to appear later in Eliot's poems), make out of "The Waste Land" the modernist Old Testament of Eliot's poetical creation.

The fifth and last part of the poem places humanity as it is face to face with the consequences of its acts and the purpose they are ascribed, if any. Here there are gathered all aspects of human life in a synthesis. People come back home exhausted after a hard day late at night, while the gardens, people's gardens, rest in "frosty silence" as if in death, for no one inhabits them. As we know from other instances of Eliot's poetry, the garden represents the inner spiritual place of the individual. Sometimes it is full of momentary sunshine, sometimes full of flowers, or washed by showers of rain, yet most of the times deserted, dry and chilly. This is the most symbolic image of the garden, signifying hopeless spiritual death, while other times it makes reference to the Garden of Eden at the beginning of humanity, which may often be revisited in its different stages and states under the spiritual form of particular gardens of individual souls. Thus, the Garden of Eden may be spiritually recovered or lost by everyone. At the beginning of this last part of the poem, the Garden seems to be rather closer to death, as it was the whole earth after the Fall of the first man, when the gates were shut behind him and he had to toil the ground and transform it into the garden he still remembered. The symbol of the garden of the lost Eden and that of the land that has to be put in order by hard work and much suffering until death covers the whole introductory fragment. The first three lines begin with the preposition "after" in order to lead the reader's attention to something that should follow the toil, and suffering, and death suggested by the red sweaty faces, the "frosty silence in the gardens", and the "agony in stony places". However, the concentrated, symbolic images of these three lines make the thought linger behind. The stone here is the land that cannot be cultivated, in spite of the toil and suffering next to agony. It is the agony of useless effort, and the agony of death brought together. It is the agony of man that cannot eliminate death all by himself. The agony of the useless effort of man to cultivate some life among the stones and the failure to be transformed into a garden parallels the later symbol of the Garden of Gethsemane, where God Himself, Christ, was kneeling on the rock and praying before His own agony, death and Resurrection. The stony places all over the earth maintain the same symbolic significance. For the moment, there is only the dry stone of the dead land where the man keeps working hard,

shouting and crying up until the moment of his death, imprisoned in his small portion of life. These extremely concentrated introductory lines show the human race in exile, taken out of the garden of eternal life it once knew. Humankind is traveling to death, both individually and collectively. The poet insists upon the inescapable state of this situation by rewriting the idea in syntactic parallelism. The tenses that he uses emphasize the tension created by the quick passage of time. "He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying." Between the past continuous of the verb "to live" and the present continuous of its opposite, there is no present perfect, no time to link the events and no compromise between life and death. In the middle of this description of the state of humanity, a glimpse of prophetic sound of spring and thunder can be distinguished. The view of close details of the dry land, of gardens and stones, opens up to the panoramic view of the mountains in the distance where everything is the same. However, over the land, the sound of spring and the voice of the thunder can be heard as a promise and commandment. Back to the small, dry, rocky space, there is a craving need for water. The sandy road winding up to the distant mountains, like the winding path of life, suffers of the universal drought. The symbol of the water of life that cannot be found among the rocks leads to the conclusion that the only sense and possibility to stop on the way is for drinking the water of life. No other halt would worth for the traveler to linger on the way, with his feet half buried in the sand, or rather, with his life half buried in the sand. The need for water is insistently rendered by repetitions or synonymous phrases like: "no water but only rock", or vice versa, "rock without water", doubled by the reiteration of the conditional sentence: "*If there were only water amongst the rock*" that takes a fluid shape in the next fragment, in the form of a running brook in the poem:

*If there were water
And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
And water
A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
(...)
But there is no water.*

The visual form of fluid arrangement of words on the page is completed by alliterations in imitation of the sounds of running water. This is given by successive words containing the *s* consonant in writing or pronunciation: cicada, grass, singing, sound, or the combination of the consonants *t*, *d*, *p* and *sh*: hermit-thrush, trees, drip, and a whole line of onomatopoeia. This passage reminds me of Moses who was asked by his people to give them water in the desert and show them a sign from God.

This is not the water existing in the land, but the promised water of life coming down from above, an old prophecy for the Waste Land. This poem, which we called the "Old Testament" of Eliot's poetry, shows the urgent need of the life-giving water to come from above in the same way in which the biblical prophets announced the Incarnation of the Logos, the Saviour of mankind, bringing the water of eternal life. There is a passage in the New Testament where Christ talked to a Samaritan woman near a well. At the moment when Christ asked her to

give him to drink water from the well He also told her that whoever drank of this water should thirst again, but those who drank from the water He brought into the world should never thirst. For the water He brought to the world is the water of Eternal Life.

Therefore, after the image and sound of the promised source of the water of ever-lasting life, the poem continues with the historical event of the resurrected Christ on the way to Emmaus. It is not openly depicted for we are still in the time of poetical prophecy.¹

That the fragment refers to the way to Emmaus is certain due to one word repeated twice so that it should not be overlooked: the time adverbial “always”. Travelers in the desert may not *always* have the illusion of someone else walking beside them. An illusion is transitory, changing and inconsistent. It comes and goes. Eliot formulates a strong affirmation about the reality of a fact, that there is *always* a third one walking beside you. He sets it in the middle of the passage. The section starts with the question of who he is, not if he is really there. The matter of identification is crucial for the relationship with the third one (Lc. 24: 13 – 31). He is the one that never leaves travelers alone in the desert or on stony, droughty places. He is there for everyone, always, though unrecognized, on the other side of you. His figure wrapped in the brown mantle, gliding, not walking like one of us on our ways is still the one that accompanies us everywhere. The colour of the mantle He wears is brown. This is the colour of earth, the humblest and least noticeable of all colours. And man was made of clay and he returns to it at his death. Thus, Christ took flesh, our substance, and raised it at His Resurrection. His disciples met him on the way to Emmaus after His rising from the dead, and they did not recognize Him for their eyes were prevented from seeing who He was. They recognized Him only at the moment of breaking the loaf, the Eucharistic gesture. Therefore, in a paradigmatic manner, the fragment in the poem presents Him wrapped up in the humble colour of our nature and hardly recognized by men. The first lines of the Gospel according to John speak of the same humble, unnoticeable coming of the Lord among men. “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not” (Jn: 1, 10). This seems to be the general state of humanity in the Waste Land. All individuals in the poem “know Him not” and barely notice Him at hard moments in the desert places of their lives, and even then, they do not know who He is. The man was created in the image and likeness of God. And the more people forget the image of their Creator and estrange from Him, they are alienated from their own image, while the likeness of His image is barely recognizable on their own faces. Therefore, Eliot shows people and their faces as “bits of paper” on which one can see no prototypal and individually identifying icon that bear a name.

The next passage builds up the same problem of broken relationship with the unrecognized Creator of mankind. The air is full of troubled sound and murmur. The voices of “maternal lamentation” raise high up in the air as when the cry of mothers that lost their children killed by Herod on the occasion of the coming of the Lord raised up to heavens. The maternal lamentation of the Mother of God who saw her holy Son crucified knew no comfort but in His resurrection on the third day. Thus, for the people that do not recognize their Creator, there is nothing left but the empty way to death. Their faces become unrecognizable and unidentifiable themselves. They march on their way to death like “hooded hordes swarming on endless plains,

¹ Some interpreters gave it a scientific, rational meaning, as that of the illusions experienced by travelers in the desert or by astronomers landed on the moon. I still think that the religious interpretation is more consistent with the answers to a spiritual problem that Eliot raised in the poem, rather than with scientific explanations for what happens to people in the desert. I would even exclude the coexistence of these two different interpretations, and maintain one or another, because their mutual influence and coexistence might lead to the idea that Christ on the way to Emmaus was just a spiritual and even illusionary apparition, not the real, incarnated presence of the resurrected Christ who actually ate together with his disciples. So, I maintain the mystical interpretation of the fragment, mostly because the whole line of thought is mystical.

stumbling in cracked earth”. These are the citizens of falling cities. Their towers fall like the tower of Babel whose builders forgot their Creator and lost their unique language. Their words no longer supported their speech, for the unique Logos was erased from their minds. So the tower was left unfinished. The towers in the poem fall and all the main cities on earth become unreal. It is very interesting this transformation of cities into unreal objects. Their death corresponds to a change from reality into illusion, the inconsistent resemblance of reality. This is the most powerful definition of death in Eliot’s poetry. A death coming unnoticed by human eyes in the substance of things and individuals alike is most often the passage into unreality, not an actual disappearance out of sight, though images of frost and ruin are equally relevant. What causes this inconspicuous death? The loss of prototypal meaning, the loss of the awareness of the presence of the Logos, leads to evanescence, to this kind of death by change into unreality. Everything that exists is supported by its meaning, its reason called *logos* in Greek. Things exist by containing their *logoi*, and the man exists as the image and likeness of his Logos, his Creator. Therefore, when “the city on the hill” or on the mountains, as Eliot writes, loses its meaning as the city of God, even the city of Jerusalem becomes unreal together with all the other cities on earth, no matter on what high place people built it. For, it is the high reason ascribed to the city that keeps it into existence, not the place. It is the spiritual foundation of the Logos that preserves the city and the man into consistent, everlasting reality, not their egocentric isolation leading to self-imprisonment and exile on top of high social or geographical places.

In the violet, crepuscular light, there is an inversed image of towers that do not exist any more. The past tense of verbs in the following lines suggests that the towers, their bells and time itself came to an end. Towers are seen upside down in the air and their bells that kept the hours are now only a memory. The voices that were once singing suggest that people are dead. In this landscape of death the wells are exhausted and the cisterns empty. All over the huge, universal grave the grass is singing, probably a chant for the death of the world. There is a chapel in the middle of the empty space, “the wind’s home”. The chapel itself, which was meant to be the house of God, lacks its Reason, too. It apparently lacks the presence of the Redeemer of the world. It was left empty, or in expectation. All this ruined landscape is seen by bats hanging upside down on the wall. The description of death is drawn again in the lines of an inverted view, and has the same cause of the passage into unreality, empty at its core. The only living creature in the valley of death is a cock, the symbolic sign of Peter’s betrayal of his Master. Peter said he did not know Him. The Christ’s apostle chose to share in the common ignorance of humanity that did not recognize his Creator. With this hint in mind we can now understand why the chapel is empty in the poem and where the omnipresent Lord is. It is the moment when Christ was taken to His Passions. It is the time before crucifixion, His death and Resurrection, a time of expectation, when the whole universe in decay was waiting for salvation. It is also the moment of Peter’s awareness of his betrayal and the moment of his repenting cry for the Lord’s forgiveness. This turns everything into forgiving hope for redemption and illumination. Therefore, the symbol of the cock in a flash of lightning bringing rain accomplishes the role and meaning of recovery in the poem and the fulfillment of a prophetic promise. This refers to a recovery of perspective, of knowledge and of life. A recovery of perspective implies that the upside down view of the world turns to its natural order of reality, Peter’s coming to his senses means recognition and knowledge. The world and the man participate by acceptance in God’s restoring sacrifice. Under this fundamental condition of participation, knowledge and acceptance, the Thunder starts speaking and his voice can be heard over the drained river, the high mountain and the arid jungle. The three words in the Vedic language are *Datta*, *Dayadhvam*, *Damyata*, which mean

“give”, “sympathize”, “control”. All these words represent the rational and moral condition of life. Although the final salvation comes through Christ exclusively, the Incarnate God and Logos, Eliot uses the old language to suggest that humanity has always known conditions for the preservation of life, in all its wisdom books and practical morals, at least for its natural order of existence after the Fall, which is no longer the immortal nature He created. Yet, it still keeps its reason. The world was founded on reason, its inner logos, from the beginning. Moreover, in Vedic, the three words have, morphologically, the same root, DA, which the poet emphasizes by writing it separately above each line introducing each of these words.

The first condition, *to give*, leads to the final sacrifice, to the shedding of blood for the other, which Christ did in His absolute manner. These greater or smaller sacrifices are not written anywhere in obituaries, yet they transcend death and lead to the preservation of communion and the continuation of life in a generation or in history. A beautiful metaphor of death and a biblical symbol, as well, is that of the broken seals of an envelope that reveal the emptiness inside it. The seals are broken by a solicitor in our empty room at the time of death. This solicitor, a personification of the last moment or of death itself, unseals the pages of our life and show us empty of compassion and sacrifice. The biblical symbol refers to the Last Judgment at the end of time when the seals of the Book of Life will be broken and the deeds of all people will appear in front of the whole mankind, in the sight of God, the angels and saints, and most of all, in front of our conscience. The deeds of the individuals and of mankind are there, transformed into “words”, actually into their inner reason or *logos*. Each one can see if their actions had a *logos* or not. It is their reason, their good and right direction that stands written in that book, not the irrational, illegible story of wrong, random, meaningless acts devoid of meaning, that cannot be put into words and cannot be contained in the comprehensive reality of their existence. As God created the world by word and the man by His hands, in the same way everything that exists and is done should be equally expressed or translated into words. Meaning is life and life is meaning. All real facts, objects or individuals contain a meaning as long as they are *logosic* acts, objects or individuals, and whenever they lose this quality they lose life, and therefore, they become unreal and fall out of it.

The second condition, and command, to sympathize, that is to love another, to share in his joy or misfortune, creates an essential link between people. It takes them out of the self-imprisonment, even at the time of death, when one is more alone than ever. The tendency of isolation reproduces the dying moment all throughout one’s life. The symbol of the key turned only once in the door of one’s room or prison, the thought of death, could be changed into the turning of the key and opening the door for another to enter, not for death. That would transform exilic life into communion and death would lose its force upon the individual, and fear would disappear. Moreover, it would be a meaningful death in self-sacrifice. Sacrifice itself and everything that one gives throughout one’s life, small or great, exhaust death of its power, suspend it and turn it into an act of eternal life. Thus the individual would be no longer alone, even at the time of death. Death itself lost its fearful shadow and power when Christ took upon Himself the whole condition of humanity and raised it out of the tomb in self-sacrifice.

The third condition, to control one’s life and actions and lead them to a meaningful purpose means to have a reason to live and an end to accomplish. Again, this means to have the Logos at the core of one’s life, not the transient self. For any human sacrifice, small or great, receives its value through the sacrifice of the Incarnate Logos, as a reflection and icon of it. The question of putting one’s lands in order contains the whole problem raised by the poem. It is the main idea of order, the right order of things, the right perspective upon the world and its course

that stands at the centre of life and the poem. As we have seen, cities and individuals are condemned to ruin and death by the upside down view they hold upon themselves and the world that is, by a reversed direction ascribed to them, which represents the opposite of the *logosic* character of creation. The opposite of being is the non-being. The lack of right meaning and purpose make them perishable and the towers crumble and places are left deserted. They all pass into unreality. To put one's lands in order means to know the Logos as the final rationality and foundation of the world and cultivate the lands with the Tree of Life in their midst, as they are meant to be images of the lost garden of the Paradise reproduced in this life. The speaker of the poem is sitting on the shore of his life, maybe at the end of it, and the thought of putting his lands in order seems unreasonable or questionable in front of an inexorable death. Nonetheless, even before the Incarnation of the Logos, the prophecies about His coming and the expectation of the Savior established a limit to death and its irreversibility. The life of all those who lived before was ruled by the same event. God warns the man by the prophet Isaiah (38: 1) that his wealth is transient and should put it in order. That means to leave it in order for those to come. There is also a spiritual answer to Eliot's question. Up to the end of one's life, man can understand its everlasting meaning and look at it from the right perspective. Therefore, it is never too late to reach that understanding in giving one's life in a continuous attitude of self-giving, sympathizing with others and controlling one's mind and action by placing the absolute Reason at its core. The poem ends with one word containing everything, again, an old one. *Shantih*, written three times at the end of the poem in the manner of the closing of the *Upanishades*, is the one-word formula of the Christian words "the peace that passes all understanding" used by Saint Apostle Paul. It represents the effect of establishing the right order in the lands and inside one's mind, the centrality of life settled upon the word of God, the change of priorities in action and perspective, the movement from a life centered upon the transient self to a life centered upon the Logos incarnate that gives meaning to the self and reflects upon it His eternal image and likeness. This is the beginning of a superior knowledge that generates the deep meaningful peace beyond everything. Yet, if the Hinduist or Buddhist peace is of a natural kind, the "peace that passes all understanding" is of a super-natural kind. They are not the same kind of peace. As "giving", "sympathising" and "controlling" are raised from the human level of understanding to the supreme, divine act of the Incarnation of the Lord, His death and Resurrection for our sake, so this last human word for peace was raised to a context beyond the old human wisdom. Actually, Eliot baptizes the Sanscrit words into the ultimate Christian meanings given to us from the foundation of the world.

In the light of the observations above, those who maintain the long-lasting controversy about the basic philosophy of this passage, whether Buddhist, or Christian, could come to terms. This may happen not in the syncretic manner of blending two religions in so far as they have "something" in common. Actually they are different at their core in spite of the superficial resemblances. One is a naturalistic religion, the other is super-natural. One is based on moral observation, the other on revelation. Moral observation is good, revelation is life complete. It includes morals as a consequence of the process of justification and illumination of man by the grace of God and redeems morals. In the Buddhist tradition, man tries to free himself from passions by himself, obeying some moral rules, which are good. In Christianity, man is liberated from all bondage, including death, by God, not by himself.

In this way, the discussion about the scope of Christianity touches its main point here. Hinduism and Buddhism propose liberation from suffering, that is, from the consequences of wrong action and passions. This is only a part of the human problem and all that man can do is

abstaining from the bad, practicing the good action. It remains enclosed in the limited circle of natural life and claims for another cycle, for one whole life is felt as insufficient for the high purpose of the Buddhist practitioner, that of being completely healed physically and spiritually. This attempt of attaining perfection by human powers only is doomed to failure. Man cannot escape death by himself, no matter how moral and good he is. The philosophy of even endless cyclical lives will still end in death. Human efforts cannot vanquish it. Man needs the hand of God who created him, nailed on the Cross, to break the natural fall and raise him above the grave of the corruptible body. The only remnant that the man of all times and cultures maintain from the creation of the world is the image of God that is structural in all human beings. This does not mean that the human being is of divine nature. He bears only the image of his Creator. This inner image of God in man, which was not completely lost after the Fall, gives morality its reason and efficiency. For morality represents the human action in accordance with the character of the inner image of God that man is made after. This is all that other religions can achieve, the moral man. Christianity saves the man completely. Only through Christ the moral man becomes the resurrected man. The participation to Christ's victory upon death is a life long effort to be not just moral, but to attain the other characteristic of his structural restoration: the likeness with God. This means to put one's lands in order. The Sanskrit words and the Buddhist natural philosophy used by Eliot receive here their Christian salvation. They show that human conscience did not lose the sense of right action after the fall of man, till the coming of the promised Saviour. Wisdom has always existed, though the plain was arid. Yet the Buddhist thought of improvement and the natural moral philosophy needed its super-natural solution brought by Christianity to the universal man.

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