

2010

Out of This Stony Rubbish: Echoes of Ezekiel in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

Luke J. Rapa
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Rapa, Luke J., "Out of This Stony Rubbish: Echoes of Ezekiel in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*" (2010). *Masters Theses*. 692.
<http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/theses/692>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research and Creative Practice at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

OUT OF THIS STONY RUBBISH:
ECHOES OF EZEKIEL IN
T.S. ELIOT'S *THE WASTE LAND*

Luke J. Rapa

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
at
Grand Valley State University
2010

© Copyright by

Luke J. Rapa

2010

OUT OF THIS STONY RUBBISH:
ECHOES OF EZEKIEL IN T.S. ELIOT'S *THE WASTE LAND*

Luke J. Rapa, M.A.

Grand Valley State University, 2010

Abstract: This essay explores T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* in light of the poet-prophet connection—a connection which was of particular interest to T.S. Eliot himself. I argue that Eliot was aware of the poet-prophet connection early in his youth and that this awareness influenced and informed *The Waste Land*. I suggest also that Eliot takes up the themes and images of the biblical prophets, and of Ezekiel in particular, as a means to structure the poem, but more importantly, as one way of “controlling, or ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (Eliot, “‘Ulysses,’ Order, and Myth,” 177). Finally, I propose that Eliot himself, through *The Waste Land*, stands for readers as a poet-prophet, and thereby offers a way out of the desolation and despair that Eliot found to be so pervasive in the modern world.

Dedication

*For Sarah, with whom I have been blessed to share my life
and whose love continues to make each new day better than the last.*

Acknowledgments

Many thanks are due to Dr. Michael Stevens, who introduced me to the works of T.S. Eliot and who challenged me with *The Waste Land* in particular. It was under Michael's guidance that I first began to try to make sense of the poem, and it was he who taught me that the poem was worth reading even before understanding it.

I am grateful also to my thesis committee, without whom this project would not have been completed. The thoughtful and meticulous work of Drs. Avis Hewitt, Benjamin Lockerd, and Michael Webster has truly made this essay more successful than I imagined it would be. To my thesis advisor, Ben, I am particularly grateful. Absent his direction, which he provided tirelessly and graciously, I would likely still be trying to argue something that brighter minds have better said. For whatever is good within what follows, I owe thanks to him; for any faults in logic, for any errors of omission or commission, or for anything that makes this work less than what it should be, I alone am responsible.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	Page 1
Chapter 2: Eliot and the Poet-Prophet Tradition	Page 5
Chapter 3: Overtones and Undercurrents: Prophetic Voices in <i>The Waste Land</i>	Page 10
Chapter 4: Ezekiel: A Waste Land Prophet	Page 17
Ezekiel's First Vision: The Calling of the Prophet	Page 20
Ezekiel's Second Vision: The Destruction of the City	Page 28
Ezekiel's Third Vision: The Valley of the Dry Bones	Page 40
Ezekiel's Fourth Vision: The Restoration of the Land	Page 47
Chapter 5: Eliot as Poet-Prophet	Page 53
Chapter 6: Conclusion	Page 56
Works Cited	Page 58
Works Consulted	Page 63

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1951, T.S. Eliot made a subtle but important connection between the poet and the prophet. In a lecture entitled “Virgil and the Christian World”—later published under the same title within his 1957 collection *On Poetry and Poets*—Eliot said that the poet “need not know what his poetry will come to mean to others; and a prophet need not understand the meaning of his prophetic utterance” (137). Through this assertion Eliot subtly unites poetic inspiration and prophecy; that is to say, Eliot implies that there is an inexorable link between the poet and the prophet—in his mind at least. This poet-prophet connection, while important, has been underappreciated and relatively unexamined by Eliot scholars.

Marianne Thormählen has argued that “the job of the *Waste Land* critic is to clarify confusing issues, point to important aspects that might be overlooked, indicate the paradoxical nature of the work as it manifests itself in its various elements, and do away with needless obstructions” rather than “present an interpretation” of the poem (40). However, if we work to fulfill any aspect of Thormählen’s charge—indeed, if we are successful in an attempt to clarify issues, to identify aspects of the poem that are overlooked, to highlight paradoxes, or to clear away obstructions that may be found within *The Waste Land*—then the result of our work will be, necessarily, a refined interpretation of the poem. In the pages that follow, I examine *The Waste Land* in light of the poet-prophet connection, in an effort to point out an important but overlooked aspect of the poem—an aspect that, when considered in this way, has great implications on the interpretation of the poem. Through this analysis, I hope ultimately that readers might better traverse the poem’s complexity, better appreciate its multiplicity, better understand its continuity, and better identify the hope it offers to us.

T.S. Eliot was not the first to note the connection between the poet and the prophet; the

connection between these two figures is recognized within literature and criticism that spans the ages. In 1595, Sir Philip Sidney marked their correlation in *An Apology for Poetry*. However, Sidney himself was certainly not the first to establish such a view: even he asserts the connection between the poet and prophet based on the perspective of the ancients who came before him. He does this by making what is, perhaps, the most prominent statement about the poet-prophet connection in British criticism. Sidney says, “Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*, which is as much as a diviner, a foreseer or prophet, as by his conjoined words *vaticinium* [prophecy] and *vaticinari* [prophesy] is manifest” (61). Sidney’s argument continues as follows:

[S]o heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge [i.e., poetry], and so far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chanceable hitting upon any such verses great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed. Whereupon grew the word of *sortes Virgilianae*, when by sudden opening of Virgil’s book they lighted upon some verse of his. . . . (61)

The poet’s word was held in such regard that people ordered their lives according to its message; indeed, since it was believed to be divinely inspired by the gods, the ancients took the poet’s message seriously.

In *A Defence of Poetry*, published 250 years after Sidney’s work, Percy Bysshe Shelley makes a point similar to Sidney’s. “Poets,” he says, “were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets” (19). Shelley continues, saying that the poet-also-prophet “not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present” (20). Poets are in tune, Shelley argues, with the happenings of the world around them. They discern what is amiss and

project what will come if the course remains the same.

More recent scholarship notes the poet-prophet connection as well. One scholar of our time, Frederick Downing, addresses this in his work. Notably, he attributes the poet-prophet correlation to the biblical tradition—to the ancient Hebrews. This is not surprising, for the biblical prophets were poets in their own right. Within a work that explores the relationship between poets and prophets—albeit unrelated to T.S. Eliot—Downing remarks, “It is in the stories of the Hebrew Bible that one first learns of the ‘poet-prophet,’ the gifted figure whose words penetrate the illusions that humans construct. . .” (102). And Walter Brueggemann, though his focus is merely tangential, makes a similar point as well: “Those whom the ancient Israelites called prophets, the equally ancient Greeks called poets” (4). He notes later, more directly, that the poet is simply the one whom “Israel calls prophet” (10). Brueggemann’s latter point has been stated even more strongly still. David Noel Freedman says that “poetry and prophecy in the biblical tradition share so many of the same features and overlap to such an extent that one cannot be understood except in terms of the other” (21). For the ancient Hebrews, the poet and the prophet were indistinguishable.

To ascribe the ancient view that connects the poet and the prophet only to the religious tradition of the Hebrews, however, may be short-sighted. Other religious traditions hold this view as well. The Islamic tradition, for example, also connects the poet with the prophet:

In Islam there is one final authentic prophet, Mohammed. The sacred scripture, the Quran, is a transcript of his utterances, and . . . they are all considered poetic. In this case, prophet and poet are one, and the two categories are coterminous. In the Quran, poetry and prophecy are the same. (Freedman 24)

Regardless of the derivation of the poet-prophet connection, the ancient view clearly holds that

the poet is prophet and the prophet is poet; the two figures are identical.

Our contemporary reading of poetry would be quite different if we read it in accordance with the view that the poet is a prophet, simply by virtue of the poetic office. But rarely do today's literary critics acknowledge the poet-prophet connection within their analyses of poetry, and rarely do we as readers consider this when reading lines of verse.

T.S. Eliot was interested in the poet-prophet connection, but little has been said about this—either in terms of the great poet himself or of his work. This essay is an exploration of the poetic work of T.S. Eliot—with a particular focus on *The Waste Land*—in light of the poet-prophet connection. I argue that Eliot was aware of the poet-prophet connection early in his youth and that this awareness influenced and informed his work—including *The Waste Land*. I suggest also that Eliot takes up the themes and images of the biblical prophets—Ezekiel in particular, and Isaiah and others to a lesser degree—as a means to structure *The Waste Land*, but more importantly, as one way of “controlling, or ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (Eliot, “‘Ulysses,’ Order, and Myth,” 177). And finally, I propose that Eliot himself, beginning with *The Waste Land*, actually stands for readers as a poet-prophet, and as a result offers a way out of the desolation and despair that Eliot found to be so pervasive in the modern world.

Chapter 2: Eliot and the Poet-Prophet Tradition

T.S. Eliot was conscious of the poet-prophet connection when he was writing as a literary critic during the latter stages of his life. The lines introduced above from “Virgil and the Christian World” were issued first in 1951 to a B.B.C. audience, when Eliot was sixty-three years old. In his discussion, Eliot considers whether or not the poet Virgil should be called a prophet because of the apparent messianic prediction contained within his fourth *Eclogue*. Eliot’s thoughts are worth quoting at length:

[W]hether we consider Virgil a Christian prophet will depend upon our interpretation of the word ‘prophecy’ . . . If a prophet were by definition a man who understood the full meaning of what he was saying, this would be for me the end of the matter. But if the word ‘inspiration’ is to have any meaning, it must mean just this, that the speaker or writer is uttering something which he does not wholly understand—or which he may even misinterpret when the inspiration has departed from him. This is certainly true of poetic inspiration: and there is more obvious reason for admiring Isaiah as a poet than for claiming Virgil as a prophet.

(137)

The conflation of poet and prophet through Eliot’s words is subtle here, but the two are joined nonetheless. Isaiah the prophet is lauded as poet, and Virgil the poet is essentially deemed a prophet. In effect, Eliot says if Isaiah can be called a poet—and surely he can, for he is the most poetic of the Old Testament prophets—then Virgil can be called a prophet as well. We must reasonably conclude through Eliot’s discussion that he was concerned with the relationship between the poetic and the prophetic, at least as evident through his literary criticism of 1951. Beyond this, however, we should also conclude that Eliot was asserting a unique relationship

between the poet and the prophet through these words. Indeed, as seen through Eliot's commentary within "Virgil and the Christian World," it appears that Eliot was keenly aware of and interested in the connection between the poet and the prophet.

But what can we say of Eliot's awareness of the poet-prophet connection in his early years? Lyndall Gordon, in *T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life*, provides considerable insight in this regard. Gordon discusses early influences on Eliot, and among them she points to Charlotte Eliot, his mother. When Charlotte Eliot's poems were placed in Harvard's Eliot Collection, Henry Ware Eliot, Jr., Eliot's brother, wrote: "Perhaps a hundred years from now the connection with T.S. Eliot will not seem so remote. Of all the family, my brother most resembled my mother in features and . . . if there is anything in heredity, it must have been from that side that T.S. Eliot got his tastes" (qtd. in Gordon 9). Gordon's commentary continues rather meaningfully in terms of Eliot's probable view toward the poet-prophet connection. She says, "It is telling to read Charlotte Eliot's poetry in the context of her son's work. She writes of the 'vision of the seer' and 'the prophet's warning cry'" (9). Through these words penned by Charlotte Eliot, young Thomas would surely have begun to associate the poetic with the prophetic. Indeed, these lines, though just snippets extracted from Charlotte Eliot's verse, demonstrate the frame of mind with which T.S. Eliot likely began thinking, very early on, about the nature and function of a poet and his poems.

Critics other than Gordon have argued the importance of Charlotte Eliot to T.S. Eliot's early formation and work as well. One of these critics, Lee Oser, explores the influence of Charlotte Eliot on her son's most significant early poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Oser's discussion highlights the effect of Puritanism on the "religious and literary culture" that was fundamental to the Eliots' New England heritage (197); it also connects that heritage to the

use of John the Baptist as a prophetic icon. Oser notes, specifically, “By the nineteenth century, the figure of John the Baptist prophesying to Americans had become a familiar sight to readers in New England” (197). He points out, additionally, that “Charlotte Eliot . . . wrote in this tradition” (197). Charlotte Eliot’s focus on the prophetic within her poems, including the use of John the Baptist as a prophetic figure, makes it likely that Eliot was aware of the poet-prophet connection in his earliest years.

Charlotte Eliot’s poetry, and the Eliots’ shared religious and cultural heritage, clearly contributed to Eliot’s earliest understanding of the relationship between the poet and the prophet. So too did the work of Arthur Symons. In fact, Symons’ work likely served only to increase or enhance the appreciation of the connection that Eliot had begun to develop at home, while under the influence of his mother. In December 1908, Eliot purchased Arthur Symons’ *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. Through Symons, who “presented the artist in the role of privileged seer,” Eliot learned that “[t]he sacred task of the poet is to shed the ‘old bondage of exteriority’ and become a prophet of the unknown, even if to shed externals is to come close to madness” (Gordon 39). Eliot noted in 1930, in a review of Peter Quennell’s *Baudelaire and the Symbolists*, that Symons’ book was influential in his own formation: “the Symons book is one of those which have affected the course of my life” (357). Given Eliot’s heritage, coupled with his appreciation for Symons, we can be sure that the figure and role of the poet-prophet was important to Eliot even as a burgeoning poet.

Nonetheless, and regardless of its origin, we surely do see through “Prufrock” that the poet-prophet was on Eliot’s mind early in his career as a poet. This is clear through lines 82 and 83 of the poem, when the poem’s persona speaks these lines: “Though I have seen my head [grown slightly bald] brought in upon a platter, / I am no prophet—and here’s no great matter.”

While there seems to be a rejection of the prophetic in these lines, the focus on the prophetic is obvious and significant. The first of these two lines, line 82, includes a reference to St. John the Baptist, who was the prophetic forerunner of Jesus Christ and who was beheaded at the request of Salome. Oser believes that Eliot's reference to John the Baptist here is a demonstration of Eliot "rebell[ing] against his heritage" (196), a statement that "the prophet no longer prophesies in the American wilderness; instead he is silenced and somewhat comically disfigured" (198). Oser connects these lines with Eliot more directly, saying that Eliot "disrupt[s] a long tradition of American Puritan iconography and implicitly repudiate[s] a legacy of mission and prophetic calling that survived within his immediate family" (198). This reading by Oser, however, is not the only plausible approach. For we might conclude through these lines that Eliot was not fully rejecting or refusing outright a prophetic calling—even if he was unsettled or anxious about it.

We cannot say that Prufrock is Eliot, or conversely, that Eliot is Prufrock. However, there may be some relationship between the two. Like Oser, Gordon links Prufrock to Eliot in an important way. She says Prufrock is "Eliot's prophet-commentator" (Gordon 44). She says later: "Eliot exploited his own inhibition in Prufrock-the-prophet's stifling fears: his head brought in, like John the Baptist's, upon a platter. He imagines persecution. He sees his greatness flicker, and is afraid" (68). Gordon's reading of "Prufrock" supports the notion that Eliot was insecure about his prophetic calling rather than rejective of it.

Prufrock's declaration "I am no prophet" is an echo of the Old Testament prophet Amos. In the Book of Amos we read, "Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son" (*King James Version*, Amos 7:14). Brian Southam highlights the connection of these lines to Amos and calls Prufrock's statement an "apologetic admission of weakness and inability" (52). Through this line, then, Eliot extends the sentiment expressed

through his allusion to John the Baptist. Beyond this, however, Eliot also ironically reinforces the connection between the poet and the prophet, as seen through his echo of Amos' denial of his own prophetic role.

Ultimately, through "Prufrock"—even while Eliot was not yet ready to embrace the prophetic, as he eventually would do through *The Waste Land*—Eliot demonstrates an awareness that poetry and prophecy are intimately connected.

Chapter 3: Overtones and Undercurrents: Prophetic Voices in *The Waste Land*

In none of T.S. Eliot's other poetic works is the presence of the prophetic as prevalent or clear as it is in *The Waste Land*. Prophetic overtones are evident even on the very surface of the poem, and while these overtones do not fully represent the scope of the prophetic within the poem, they do serve as important markers that are essential to our reading of it. This focus is not surprising, given Eliot's interest in and early exploration of the poet-prophet connection. In *The Waste Land*, however, as we shall see, the prophetic is truly central to the poem.

The prophetic overtones evident within *The Waste Land* are noticeable largely through three personae that appear in the poem. The first of these personae is the Cumaean Sybil, who is noted in the poem's epigraph. That the Sybil is introduced within the epigraph is significant, for this reference to her is our very first glimpse as readers into the world of the poem. An interesting glimpse into the poem she is, too, for while the Sybil is a part of the poem, she is also a part wholly aside, "a peripheral writing, a side-jotting; bottled away from the rest of the text" (Bedient 6). The epigraph is a set of lines borrowed by Eliot from Petronius' *Satyricon*. According to Southam, Eliot's edition of the book includes the following translation of what the poet appropriates as the epigraph of *The Waste Land*. The lines were spoken by Trimalchio:

‘Yes, and I myself with my own eyes even saw the Sybil hanging in a cage; and when the boys cried at her: “Sybil, Sybil, what do you want?” “I would that I were dead,” she caused to answer.’ (Southam 133)

Literary tradition tells that the Sybil asked Apollo to live eternally, but she failed to ask for eternal youth as well. Thus, when we read of the Sybil in Eliot's epigraph, we are to think of her as aged, wishing to die in order to be released from her perpetual degeneration.

The epigraph can be read as a simple precursor to what both F. O. Matthiessen and

Cleanth Brooks, Jr. have called, in general, a “death-in-life” theme of the poem (Brooks, “*The Waste Land: An Analysis*” 185). In fact, many believe the Sybil’s presence in the epigraph is meant to signify the central idea of the poem as a whole. Says Grover Smith: the Sybil’s “misfortune in the epigraph—to be shut in a cage and to wither away indefinitely, being preserved from death but condemned . . . to grow old—symbolizes the motif of the waste land” (69). While this perspective is sound—for the Sybil’s desire to die and her view that living is a curse both clearly inform our reading of the poem—the presence of the Sybil does more than just clue us in to this theme of despair. The presence of the Sybil frames the poem itself as prophetic and attunes our eye and ear to the prophetic within the poem. David Ward puts it this way: “the tenor of the epigraph from Petronius is not simply to indicate a longing for the timeless, ideal beauty of eternity; it is also to suggest the weariness, the burdensome weight of prophetic knowledge; the dissatisfaction and disgust with the world which must be felt by those gifted with the seer’s insight” (72). Ward’s claim is reasonable, for the presence of the Cumaean Sybil recalls the story of the Sybil as told throughout antiquity. The Cumaean Sybil is always associated with the prophetic. Virgil tells us, for example: “In her the Delian god of prophecy / Inspires uncanny powers of mind and soul, / Disclosing things to come. . .” (*Aen.* VI.17-19). Thus the Sybil in the epigraph of *The Waste Land* serves a double function. On one hand, her wish to die prepares us for our encounter with the arid desert of *The Waste Land*, pointing us to the despair, depravity, mortality, and sterility of life therein. Yet on the other, she signifies the prophetic nature of what lies within the poem itself. Foreshadowing the apparent hopelessness of life in the Waste Land, the Sybil prophetically proclaims—along with the Israelites in Ezekiel 37—“Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts” (Ezek. 37:11).

The second prophetic persona in *The Waste Land* is Madame Sosostris, the poem’s

“famous clairvoyante” (43). Madame Sosostris is often thought of as the poem’s modern Sybil. Through her reporting of visions through the Tarot cards, she stands as the character in *The Waste Land* who gives a prophetic warning to the poem’s protagonist:

Here, said she,
 Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
 (Those are the pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
 Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
 The lady of situations.
 Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
 And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
 Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
 Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
 The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
 I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring. (46-56)

Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley, in *Reading The Waste Land*, point out that “[m]ost commentaries on Madame Sosostris say that she is a contemporary debasement of the seers and oracles of myth” (77). Madame Sosostris can be read as Brooker and Bentley posit because her prophetic warnings do actually come true within the poem. For example, the Phoenician Sailor is drowned in Part IV of the poem, “Death By Water.” Later, the Hanged Man appears through a subtle reframing of Sosostris’ words “I do not find / The Hanged Man” (54-5) in Part V: “Who is the third who walks always beside you? When I count there are only you and I together / But when I look ahead up the white road, There is always another one walking beside you” (359-62). The “crowds of people, walking round in a ring” in line 56 are found in the earliest Unreal City

fragment: “Under the brown fog of a winter dawn, / A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many” (61-2), but their presence is also implied in the nursery rhyme lines near the close of the poem: “London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down” (426).

Madame Sosostris, however, accomplishes more than this in the poem: she stands as a commentary on our desire to ascertain knowledge and determine our place and purpose in the world. “Like the Sybil,” Ward argues, Madame Sosostris “is a prophetess . . . but it is neither the pathos nor the beauty of prophecy that Eliot stresses here; it is the absurdity with which we grope towards meaning, using the only tools we have” (87). Ward similarly describes the function of the Sosostris section of the poem as a whole: “The Tarot passage is not simply satire on fortune tellers; it is bitter sarcasm about the natural human anxiety for knowledge, the longing to know ‘what it all means’” (87). In this way, the influence of Symons, the poet-prophet connection, and Eliot’s use of the mythical method become relevant and evident through Sosostris. Against the backdrop of Symons’ work, which Eliot admittedly revered, Sosostris seems even to point toward the conclusions that will be drawn in the discussion that follows, when we will read the poem alongside Ezekiel. Rather than highlighting these conclusions here, it will be sufficient for now just to quote from Symons’ introduction to *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*:

The fear of death is not cowardice; it is, rather, an intellectual dissatisfaction with an enigma which has been presented to us, and which can be solved only when its solution is of no further use. All we have to ask of death is the meaning of life, and we are waiting all through life to ask that question. . . . What we all want is to be quite sure that there is something which makes it worth while to go on living, in what seems to us our best way, at our finest intensity. (326-7)

Madame Sosostris stands as a figure who calls into question the search for meaning in life while

reinforcing, like the Sybil within the poem's epigraph, the prophetic nature of the poem itself. As we will see, Eliot provides through *The Waste Land* an early answer to that question about life's meaning, forced upon us here by Sosostris.

The third and perhaps most important prophetic persona within the poem is Tiresias. While Tiresias does not appear until Part III of the poem, "The Fire Sermon," he nonetheless figures prominently with respect to the poem as a whole. Eliot himself, in his note to line 218, provides us with some insight into Tiresias' presence and role within *The Waste Land*:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a "character," is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all of the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem. (*Collected Poems* 94)

Ward makes an important point about Eliot's commentary, and this point reinforces our discussion about the poem's focus on the prophetic. Ward says, "Tiresias is blind; what he *sees* is nothing to do with what is ordinarily called sight. The substance of the poem, therefore, is visionary or prophetic experience" (70-1). Taken literally, what Tiresias prophetically sees within the poem, in particular, is the loveless exchange between the typist and the clerk—a representation of the empty and futile nature of people's lives in the Waste Land. But Tiresias' function as a seer serves a broader function than just bearing witness to what Russell Kirk calls "copulation without ardor and loss of chastity without pleasure or remorse" (87). Through his role as a prophet, Tiresias, like Madame Sosostris and the Sybil, points to the prophetic nature of the poem as a whole. Steven Helmling argues this point rather well: "the power to which the

Sybil and Madame Sosostris both lay claim, the power of ‘prophecy,’ of potent utterance in a demoralized world, is a power that Eliot as poet, and *The Waste Land* as poem, clearly aspire to” (140). This “aspiration,” as Helmling calls it, “surface[s] most visibly in the famous footnote about Tiresias” (140).

While the presence of the Sybil, Madame Sosostris, and Tiresias clearly points to *The Waste Land*’s focus on the prophetic, quasi-prophetic voices within the poem can also be found. These voices, or undercurrents, reveal the same focus. One such quasi-prophetic voice is that of Philomel, who is first presented in Part II, “A Game of Chess.” There we read:

The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
“Jug Jug” to dirty ears. (99-103)

The cries of Philomel, once she is changed into a nightingale, reveal the truth of her rape by Tereus (viz. *Metamorphoses* Book VI). In *The Waste Land*’s Part III, “The Fire Sermon,” Philomel’s cries are repurposed in order to depict the depravity of the city. In between the fragment that ends with the reference to Sweeney and Mrs. Porter’s rendezvous and the fragment with Mr. Eugenides, we find the voice of the nightingale once again:

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc’d.
Tereu (203-6)

At the close of the poem, the twits and jugs from earlier in the poem transform into “O swallow

swallow” (428). The cancelled lines from the transcript of the original drafts of the poem confirm the connection between the twits and jugs and the later swallow. The lines quoted above appear thus in the draft version of “The Fire Sermon”:

Twit twit twit

Jug jug jug jug jug jug

Tereu

O swallow swallow

Ter (*The Waste Land: A Facsimile* 101-105)

Another quasi-prophetic voice is that of Ariel, adapted from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and alluded to throughout *The Waste Land*. First, Sosostris proclaims aside, “(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)” in line 48 of the poem. This is an echo of Ariel’s song to the lamenting Prince Ferdinand. Later these lines are repeated by the poem’s protagonist: “I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes” (124-5). Borrowed and again adapted from *The Tempest*, this phrase connects with Part IV of the poem, “Death By Water.” There we read of Phlebas the Phoenician: “A current under sea / Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell / He passed the stages of his age and youth” (315-7). As Southam points out, the rising and falling here “take[s] up the image of ‘sea change’ in Ariel’s song” (183). Thus Ariel stands here, alongside Sosostris, as a quasi-prophetic voice in *The Waste Land*.

Other quasi-prophetic voices, like that of St. Augustine, may be found in *The Waste Land* (cf. 307-310). Notwithstanding, these quasi-prophetic voices are heard together with those of the Sybil, Sosostris, and Tiresias, and thereby solidify the central role that the prophetic plays in our reading of the poem.

Chapter 4: Ezekiel: A Waste Land Prophet

T.S. Eliot venerated James Joyce's use and adaptation of myth in *Ulysses*, which was published in 1922, the same year as Eliot's *The Waste Land*. As a means of expressing his admiration, Eliot noted that "[i]n using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him" ("*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth," 177). Eliot noted further that Joyce's method was "simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (177).

The "mythical method" (178) as defined by Eliot in "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth" is not unlike what Eliot himself attempts through *The Waste Land*, albeit in poetic rather than narrative form. In fact, the controlling or ordering of life—or working to derive its meaning—was a central preoccupation of Eliot's throughout his life and in his work. Notably, Eliot's appreciation for Virgil was similar to his appreciation for Joyce; and so was his admiration of the Hebrew prophets. "Virgil was, among all authors of classical antiquity, one for whom the world made sense, for whom it had order and dignity, and for whom, as for no one before his time except the Hebrew prophets, history had meaning" ("Virgil and the Christian World," 148).

Eliot seemed to revere the Hebrew people because of their belief that history had meaning. Eliot published *The Waste Land* in 1922, but had begun writing it not long after the end of World War I. This was a time during which the order of the world and the meaning of life were questionable. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot borrows from the Hebrew prophets, taking up themes and images found in their works—from Ezekiel in particular, and Isaiah and others to a lesser degree—as part of his own attempt to utilize the mythical method, to order the world and derive meaning from life, to ensure an appreciation for history. With this in view, the Book of

Ezekiel holds a preeminent place in our discussion about *The Waste Land*. While many critics cite Ezekiel as an important source of the poem's prophetic tone, no one, so far as I am aware, has discussed in detail how the Book of Ezekiel can be read as a gloss on the poem as a whole.

For example, David Ward, in *T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*, briefly examines what he calls one of Ezekiel's "peculiar prophetic episodes" (78), but goes only just beyond that in his discussion about the connection between that and *The Waste Land*. While mentioning a few of the Ezekiel allusions, including "[b]roken images, a waste land, fallen cities, and a desolate altar," Ward simply states that "the parallels between Ezekiel and *The Waste Land* could be multiplied much further" (77-8). Another critic, Peter Martin, cites the importance of both the "Son of man" appellation that appears in line 20 of *The Waste Land* and Eliot's corresponding note which points us to Ezekiel 2:1. However, Martin focuses his discussion largely on how the "son of man" appellation informs the poem as a whole, while also bringing to bear how the use of the term "son of man" in Daniel 7:13 sheds light on the poem as well. Leonard Unger suggests that the Ezekiel 2:1 reference is only important insofar as "we consider the entire book of Ezekiel as relative to *The Waste Land*," but concludes simultaneously that, for the purposes of his work, "space forbids discussion of it" (51-2). And finally, Marianne Thormählen focuses an exploration on the importance of Ezekiel 37 to our reading *The Waste Land*—and also, tangentially, to the second part of *Ash Wednesday*—but says only that "other Ezekiel passages are relevant to the entire poem" without specifying or examining those passages in detail (40).

Given Eliot's interest in the poet-prophet connection, and the prophetic focus of the poem as discussed above, the parallels between Ezekiel and *The Waste Land* cannot be overlooked. While the critics noted above, along with numerous others, allude to the importance of Ezekiel as it relates to the poem, a careful exploration of the particular parallels between Ezekiel and *The*

Waste Land—while considering the work of Isaiah and other prophets as well, when appropriate—provides us with a framework for better understanding the prophetic within the poem, and therefore allows a more hopeful reading than we might otherwise be afforded.

Said differently, what is notable about the parallels between *The Waste Land* and Ezekiel, as well as other biblical prophets, is that they provide us with an opportunity to read *The Waste Land* as a less foreboding work than we might in the absence of such a comparison. For the Hebrew prophets, in their original context—though they force the Israelites to face death, destruction, and impending doom, much as *The Waste Land* forces us—always offer through their prophecy the possibility of renewal and salvation.

Within the Book of Ezekiel there are four specific vision passages that figure prominently in the prophet's divine message to the Israelites. These four vision passages, when examined alongside *The Waste Land*, bring into relief both structural and thematic parallels between the poem itself and the Book of Ezekiel. While the prophet's visions are not the only material from Ezekiel relevant to *The Waste Land*, the four vision passages within that biblical book serve as meaningful units that help organize the discussion that follows. As we will see, while there is not perfect overlap between Ezekiel and *The Waste Land*, these passages from Ezekiel seem to align with the development and progression of the poem. The vision passages within Ezekiel are these:

1. Chapters 1-3: The vision of the divine and the call of the prophet Ezekiel;
2. Chapters 8-11: The vision of destruction to the city and the departure of God's glory from the temple;
3. Chapter 37: The vision of the dry bones; and
4. Chapters 40-48: The vision of the restored land and temple.

It is difficult if not impossible to say that Eliot had this collection of Ezekiel passages

specifically in mind when drafting *The Waste Land*, and surely we must be careful not to ascribe intentionality to Eliot's borrowings from the Book of Ezekiel as a whole. However, as discussed above, we cannot doubt the author's interest in the prophetic, and neither can we doubt his familiarity with the Book of Ezekiel; for he borrows explicitly from Ezekiel's second chapter. He points us there directly within his notes to the poem, and other allusions abound. Regardless of intentionality, the parallels between Ezekiel's four vision passages and *The Waste Land* allow us to consider how Eliot uses his own method to order the world, to articulate how life can be seen as meaningful.

Ezekiel's First Vision: The Calling of the Prophet

The opening few chapters of the Book of Ezekiel comprise the first vision passage within that Old Testament book of prophecy. Chapters 1-3, in particular, are the substance of Ezekiel's first vision, and these chapters are of interest when reading Ezekiel alongside Eliot's *The Waste Land*. In effect, Ezekiel's first three chapters depict Ezekiel's initial vision of and encounter with the divine, as well as his subsequent calling as a prophet of Yahweh, the God of the Israelites.

The opening lines of Ezekiel are fantastic and provocative. As the book of the prophet begins, we are introduced to the priest Ezekiel, who is called by God to prophesy to the Israelites living in exile from the holy city Jerusalem: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1). It is the fourth month—while the Hebrew calendar is different from our Gregorian calendar, we are indeed reminded of Eliot's April—and the Israelites are at a great remove from their homeland. They have only memories of the land they used to inhabit, the land of milk and honey (cf. Exod. 3:8, Ezek. 20:6,

Ezek. 20:15, etc.). And they have, no doubt, a strong desire to return.

Ezekiel first recounts his vision of the four figures (Ezek. 1:4-21), through which he “sees composite ‘living beings’ whose features are difficult to describe or even to imagine” (Wilson, “Prophecy in Crisis” 124). Ezekiel’s vision of the four figures precedes his vision of the divine (Ezek. 1:22-28), which is equally difficult to describe or imagine. The prophet’s visions are extraordinary—nearly unintelligible. “By using extraordinary images,” Robert Wilson explains, “the prophet seeks to describe the divine world, which is ultimately indescribable. As is frequently the case in dreams and visions, objects begin to blur, and events no longer conform to logic or the laws of common experience” (124).

Similar is the vision of T.S. Eliot, at least as expressed through the opening lines of *The Waste Land*. Part I of the poem, “The Burial of the Dead,” begins with a commentary that runs in stark contrast with poetic tradition. The first lines of *The Waste Land* read this way:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain. (1-4)

Here, at the outset of Eliot’s poem, we find a fantastic inversion of the traditional poetic world. Spring, which is often a representation of hope for and joy at the newness and fullness of life, is shown here to be unkind and unproductive, even baneful.¹ Southam reports that “[c]ritics usually contrast this account of April as ‘the cruellest month’ with the opening to the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer . . . which is conventionally energetic and cheerful in accordance with the traditional treatment of spring” (138). The world Eliot depicts is clearly different from Chaucer’s. It is not a place where the West Wind fosters sprouting fields or where

¹ See Ferber for a helpful commentary regarding typical representations of spring within literature.

spring rain promises flowers in full bloom. Rather, it is a world with “dead land” (2), a world that seems unproductive and unhopeful.

Both the beginning of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and that of Ezekiel’s work produce in us a similar awe and bewilderment as we read them. We are no more certain of the quality or essence of the world of *The Waste Land* than we are of the world of the prophet Ezekiel. As noted above, in Ezekiel “objects begin to blur, and events no longer conform to logic or the laws of common experience” (Wilson, “Prophecy” 124). This is also true in *The Waste Land*; for the poem begins with a retelling of various experiences, or the describing of snippets of various memories through which the poem’s speaker recounts different facets of experienced life. Each recollection fades into the next, but exactly whose memories these are is not clear. What is clear is that the winter that “kept us warm” (5) and sustained “a little life” (6-7) quickly morphs into a shower of summer rain on the Starnbergersee (8). The rain, in turn, dissipates into sunlight of the Hofgarten (10), where an uncertain “we” (9) “drank coffee, and talked for an hour” (11). As with what we read in Ezekiel, objects in *The Waste Land* blur together, and events do not align with normal experience.

Ezekiel’s vision continues in Chapter 2, when the divine being speaks to the prophet for the first time. “And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee” (Ezek. 2:1). The “son of man” appellation is introduced here in Ezekiel but is used ninety-three times throughout the book as a whole. Its use is ubiquitous and unique, within the Old Testament, at least, to the Book of Ezekiel.² Biblical exegetes typically agree that the use of this phrase within Ezekiel “emphasizes the difference between” God and man, or highlights the humanness of the prophet in light of the divine (Block 30). C. Hassell Bullock says this

² While the phrase “son of man” appears in the book of Daniel as well, commentators generally view its use there as representative of the nation of Israel as a whole, and thus different from its use in Ezekiel. See Morgenstern or Collins, for example.

differently, though his conclusion is the same: “By means of [the “son of man”] title, the Lord addresse[s] the prophet and thus stresse[s] his humanity over and against the divine majesty” (28). Bullock makes another important point: “[T]he use of the [“son of man”] title impresses a particular stamp on Ezekiel’s ministry. It suggests that he was singularly identified with those whom he served” (28). Ultimately, what we find in Ezekiel Chapter 2 is the call of Ezekiel as marked by the “son of man” designation.

Turning back to *The Waste Land*, we find the phrase “son of man” in use by Eliot, taken up and adopted for use within the poem:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water. (19-24)

Eliot’s first note to the poem—that is, the first other than his general introduction to the notes—points us from line 20 of *The Waste Land* directly to Ezekiel 2:1. Unger has suggested that “it is significant” that Eliot’s primary note is a reference to Ezekiel (52). It is important first because it reinforces the poem’s focus on the prophetic, as initially introduced through the epigraph and its reference to the Cumaean Sibyl. It is also important because, as Ward proposes, it “impl[ies] that prophetic knowledge is embodied in the poem” (78-9).

If there is prophetic knowledge embodied within the poem, as Ward suggests, then the poem’s protagonist—or perhaps even the poet—must be prophetic. Oscar Cargill considers the latter to be true. “We may assume,” he explains, “that [Eliot] is selected and bade stand erect as a

prophet . . . he is a poet with the power of vision” (Cargill 275-6). Moreover, through Eliot’s use of the biblical phrase, Cargill continues, Eliot actually “defines the role of the poet as visionary” (276). As noted above, the title “son of man” in Ezekiel marks the difference between the prophet and the divine, his humanness in light of the divine. While the prophet is separate from God, he is no doubt called by God to deliver his divine message to the people. “And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiff-hearted. I do send thee unto them” (Ezek. 2:3-4). Can we not say the same regarding the prophetic persona within *The Waste Land*? Doesn’t he too convey a divine message?

Some suggest not. Martin points out that the prophet of *The Waste Land* is actually “mute: he ‘cannot say, or guess’” (199). In other words, he cannot convey a divine message because he is inept through silence. Since the prophet within the poem “cannot say, or guess” (21) in response to the compound question, “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?” (19-20), he is defunct at best and illegitimate at worst. On the surface, these lines do seem to delegitimize the call of the prophet within *The Waste Land*. Through them, in fact, the poem’s prophetic persona seems to stand in contradistinction to the precedent “son of man,” Ezekiel, who was actually called to “say,” and even to say with great authority, “‘Thus says the Lord God’” (cf. Ezek. 2:4, 3:11, 3:27, etc.).

John Richardson goes beyond saying that the poem’s prophet is simply defunct. He insists that “the voice of God mocks this ‘son of man’s’ inability to possess the traditional prophet’s knowledge of ‘roots’ and ‘branches’, and sneers at his ignorance of anything but ‘a heap of broken images’” (195). What Richardson does not acknowledge—and neither do the

others who decry the legitimacy of the prophet within *The Waste Land* based on these lines—is that Ezekiel was also mute in the earliest stages of his calling as a prophet of Yahweh. Consider Ezekiel 3:26-27: “And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that though shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God.” That the prophetic persona within *The Waste Land* “cannot say” (21) at the outset of the poem actually confirms the parallel between the speaker of the poem and the prophet Ezekiel rather than denies it.

Ward suggests that lines 19-22 of the poem together comprise “the point at which Eliot most unambiguously refers to the language and habit of Hebrew prophecy” (77). Biblical allusions, clearly drawn from the work of the Old Testament prophets, are indeed prevalent. As Benjamin Lockerd points out, here “we find ourselves in the desert with the sun beating on stones and rocks. It is a biblical desert, with echoes of Exodus, Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes, and Isaiah” (155). While the “roots” and “branches” in line 19 echo Isaiah’s words of promise about the coming Messiah (cf. Isa. 11:1), the “heap of broken images” in line 22 recalls “fragments of artifacts that were worshipped by their own creators, the Israelites” (Lockerd 156). In Ezekiel, the selfsame Israelites are warned of God’s impending judgment because of their idolatry and rejection of him as the one true God. Ezekiel 6:4-6 is particularly relevant here:

And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your

idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

The borrowing from these verses is notable throughout *The Waste Land*. Ronald Bush, quoting from an unpublished 1932 lecture given by Eliot, called “The Bible as Scripture and Literature,” brings to bear some important thoughts of Eliot’s in terms of taking up and adapting images.

Eliot is quoted as saying:

You cannot effectively “borrow” an image, unless you borrow also, or have spontaneously, something like the feeling which prompted the original image. . . . You are entitled to take it for your own purposes in so far as your fundamental purposes are akin to those of the one who is, for you, the author of the phrase, the inventor of the image; or, if you take it for other purposes then your purposes must be consciously and *pointedly* diverse from those of the author. . . . (qtd. in Bush 101)

Eliot’s purposes, we might say, are likely not pointedly diverse from those of Ezekiel’s. Further discussion will enhance this perspective, to be sure.

Eliot, through his note to line 23 of the poem, points us to the fifth verse of Ecclesiastes 12: “Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.” Lines 22-23 of *The Waste Land*, however, continue to remind us also of the Hebrew prophets. Consider Jonah: after his shade-tree is destroyed, the east wind scorches him and the sun beats down upon him. Within the desert, Jonah—very much like the Sybil in the epigraph—longs for death. “And it came to pass,

when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live” (Jon. 4:8). In addition to Jonah, we are also reminded of Elijah, who “flees from Jezebel into the desert where he sits under a juniper tree and, in despair, prays for death”—the story recounted in 1 Kg. 19:4-13 (Richardson 195). This too reminds us of the Sybil and her wish for death. And, of course, the “dry stone” (24) hearkens back to Moses, who called forth water from the rock as the Israelites were relegated to the desert after their exodus from Egypt (Lockerd 156).

The poem maintains its biblical tone as it continues to borrow from the Hebrew prophets:

There is shadow under this red rock,
 (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
 And I will show you something different from either
 Your shadow at morning striding behind you
 Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
 I will show you fear in a handful of dust. (25-30)

Readers familiar with Isaiah’s prophecy might initially connect the biblical allusions within the first few lines with the restoration of Israel. For through the coming messiah, there will be for the Israelites both refuge and solace that compares to “rivers of water in a dry place” and the “shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. 32:2). Rather than offering the promise of redemption through these lines, however, “Eliot’s prophetic persona invites us into the shadow of the rock to show us ‘fear in a handful of dust’” (Lockerd 156). This invitation more closely parallels the words of Isaiah as he warns Israel of the Lord’s impending judgment as a result of its unfaithfulness:

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty . . . And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (Isa. 2:10, 19-21)

While lines 19-22 of *The Waste Land* indeed echo the words of the Hebrew prophets, we have yet to see any promise of order or meaning—any hope—in the Waste Land. These only become visible through further exploration of the parallels between the poem and Ezekiel.

Ezekiel's Second Vision: The Destruction of the City

The lines of poetry in *The Waste Land* come to us, as readers, as various fragments. Conrad Aiken, a good friend of Eliot's, and a fellow poet-critic, contends in one of the earliest explications of the poem that *The Waste Land* comprises a "conglomerate of mutually discolorative fragments" that present themselves as "sharp, discrete, [and only] slightly related" (151). These fragments contained by the poem are indeed seemingly disparate and disjointed. However, they continue to parallel, in a way, the visions of the prophet Ezekiel. While lines 1-30 of *The Waste Land* correspond with the first three chapters of Ezekiel, the next lines of the poem seem to parallel chapters 8-11, which is the second of the four vision passages that appear in Ezekiel. Together these chapters project Ezekiel's vision of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the departure of God's glory from the Israelites based on their abominations.

In the next passage of *The Waste Land*, which comes just after the “son of man” passage discussed above, we are introduced to “Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante” (43). Sosostris “[i]s known to be the wisest woman in Europe, / With a wicked pack of cards” (44-5). She is a diviner and a prophetess, like the Cumaean Sybil of the poem’s epigraph, and serves to reinforce, at least on a surface level, the prophetic focus of *The Waste Land*. Reading Sosostris carefully, however, she does more than just acknowledge the prophetic within the poem. As Brian Diemert points out, “for most commentators, [Sosostris] represents a debased religion or a parodic distortion of genuine prophets such as the Sybil of Cumae or Tiresias” (175). Moreover, he says, “[t]he whole Sosostris episode . . . is seen to reflect the degenerate spirituality of the Waste Land’s inhabitants” (175).

In addition to reinforcing the prophetic within the poem, Madame Sosostris signifies that the Waste Land inhabitants rely on false gods in a fruitless search for meaning in their lives. David Ward reaches a similar conclusion through his discussion of the diviner’s tools. As noted above, Ward posits that the “Tarot passage . . . is bitter sarcasm about the natural human anxiety for knowledge, the longing to ‘know what it all means’” (87). Is not the Israelites’ reliance upon false gods, as found in Ezekiel 8-11, similar to what we see here in *The Waste Land*?

At the beginning of the eighth chapter of Ezekiel, we find the prophet Ezekiel receiving dictates from God to prophesy against the ever-increasing abominations which appear, rather progressively, within the second of the prophet’s vision passages. Ezekiel says, as the passage begins, “[A]nd the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy” (Ezek. 8:3). Exegetes

associate this “image of jealousy” with the Canaanite goddess of fertility, Asherah.³ Thus the worship of the idol of Asherah is one of the evils against which Ezekiel is called to prophesy: “He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations” (Ezek. 8:6). Ezekiel’s visions of the abominations within the city of Jerusalem continue in the verses that follow:

So I went in [through the city wall] and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth . . . Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord’s house which was toward the north; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (Ezek. 8:10-12, 14)

Tammuz is one version of the dying god and, therefore, is linked to Sir James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. Ward contends, “Tammuz (the west Semitic version of the Greek Adonis) is the dying god blasphemously mourned by the women in Ezekiel’s Temple, the dying god which, in his many manifestations, is hunted down by Frazer’s eager eclectic scholarship in *The Golden Bough*” (78). This point connects Ezekiel to *The Waste Land* quite certainly. In Eliot’s notes to the poem, which were first published in the 1922 Boni and Liveright edition of *The Waste Land*, he pays homage to two works that were influential to him and are, at least to some degree,

³ See Baruch Margalit, for example.

evident within the poem: *From Ritual to Romance* and *The Golden Bough*. The former, written by Jessie Weston, relates to the legend of quest for the Holy Grail; the latter, by Sir James Frazer, is an anthropological study in religion and mythology and discusses ancient ritual, including fertility cults, sacrifice, death, and rebirth. That Ezekiel is prophesying against the Israelites for their idolatry, including their preference of the fertility gods above the Hebrew god Yahweh, is notable: through this passage, the myths explored by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* and those recounted in the Book of Ezekiel are connected. While Ezekiel and Frazer would consider the worship of Tammuz differently from each other, the connection between the poem and Ezekiel is solidified nonetheless.

John Richardson makes an important point related to this connection. He concludes that scholars typically “follow Eliot’s note in identifying [the desert in the poem] with the deserts of vegetation myth described by James Frazer and Jessie Weston; and they see it as connected in a secondary way with the desert of the prophets through the echoes of Old Testament prophecy” (187). He argues at the same time, however, that the desert of the prophets and the desert of Weston and Frazer are “incompatible with each other” (187). Richardson believes that critics have failed to recognize that the two deserts are irreconcilably different. He says, on one hand, “The waste land of the vegetation myth is part of the normal cycle of the year, a winter or a dry season, which is explained by the fertility cults as a death of vegetation caused by the weakness of a god, Tammuz or Adonis” (187). On the other hand, “The wasteland of the prophets is . . . either the wilderness into which the prophet retires in protest at the degeneracy of his people, or it is the product of a drought, visited on the Hebrews precisely because they have been following fertility, or other, cults” (187). However, there are some important similarities between the waste lands of the fertility cults, as discussed by Frazer, and that of the Hebrews. James Frazer

describes how the waste land comes as part of the vegetation myth, as a result of the death of Adonis: “[T]he death of Adonis is not the natural decay of vegetation in general under the summer heat or the winter cold; it is the violent destruction of the corn by man, who cuts it down on the field, stamps it to pieces on the threshing-floor, and grinds it to powder in the mill” (393-4). The desert of the Israelites likewise comes through violence, although it would be going too far to say this violence is exactly the same. Nevertheless, the next few verses of Ezekiel relate. First the Lord reports grievances that result from the priests of Israel engaging in sun worship (Ezek. 8:16) but then, more importantly, he extends these grievances because the Israel has filled its lands with violence:

Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity. . . . (Ezek. 8:17-18)

With violence at the core of the desert of Frazer’s fertility myth and also at the core of the Hebrews’ waste land, the desert of the Ezekiel the prophet and that of Frazer are actually linked. They are not, as Richardson suggests, incompatible with each other.

The prophet Ezekiel details the annihilation of the unfaithful, idolatrous, violent Israelites. This annihilation is reported through the prophet’s vision of Yahweh speaking to his marauders, and then to Ezekiel in turn:

And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women . . . Defile the house, and fill the courts

with the slain . . . Then he said unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. And for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. (Ezek. 9:5-6, 9-10)

As a result of the Israelites' turning against Yahweh—their reliance upon false gods and their abandonment of his laws—the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants are to bear total destruction.

The destruction of the city and its inhabitants in *The Waste Land* is similar to that which we see in Ezekiel 8-11. The conclusion of the Sosostriis episode leads into a segment that introduces the ruined state of the city and its people:

Unreal City,
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
 I had not thought death had undone so many.
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet. (60-5)

Indeed, the utter destruction and death that is imminent for the inhabitants of Ezekiel's city seems to be carried forward into Eliot's poetic Waste Land. Eliot's notes for lines 63-4, point us to Dante's *Inferno*. Through the use of an allusion to the *Inferno*, we see the death-in-life theme that Brooks identifies within the poem. Members of the London crowd, walking over the River Thames on London Bridge, are clearly dejected. They are downcast and barely breathing. Like those in Canto III of Dante's Hell, the inhabitants of the Waste Land "can place no hope in death" (46); but neither can they place hope in life. They lead an "abject," "blind life" (46-7).

They are “wretched ones, who never were alive” (64). However, like the dual-function of both the Sybil and Madame Sosostriis, these lines signify more than the death-in-life theme of the poem. For the Unreal City in *The Waste Land* is filled with the slain, just like the streets of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 9 (cf. also Ezekiel 6:4-7). While I will say more about this later, it is sufficient to note here that the first of the named “Unreal” cities in Part V is Jerusalem (373-376)—a reference that makes the connection between the Waste Land and the Jerusalem of the ancient Israelites unquestionable. At this point in the poem, the Unreal City, in which we now find the ruined souls of the Waste Land, is exactly what Hugh Kenner has called it: an “urban apocalypse” where “the great City dissolve[s] into a desert where voices [sing] from exhausted wells” (46). The plight of those in the Waste Land mirrors that of the Israelites: they seem to cry out but get no response (cf. Ezek. 8:18).

Amidst the discussion of the abominations of the Israelites and the announcement of God’s judgment upon them, Ezekiel’s vision reveals the departure of God’s glory from the temple. This takes place by progression. First, “the glory of the God of Israel” is found at the entrance to the north gate of the temple (Ezek. 8:4-5). Soon after, “the glory of the God of Israel was gone up . . . to the threshold of the house” (Ezek. 9:3). The glory of the Lord then departs from the temple and moves to the east gate of the temple (Ezek. 10:18-9). And finally, the glory of the Lord moves from the midst of the city to the “mountain which is on the east side of the city” (Ezek. 11:23). Looking ahead in *The Waste Land*, it is notable that the voice of the thunder comes at a great remove from the city—it comes in the mountains in Part V, “What the Thunder Said.” Here, however, in the context of Ezekiel 8-11, it is enough to say that as the abominations of the Israelites worsen, the glory of Yahweh moves further from the city and finally appears to abandon the Israelites altogether.

The lines that follow the “Unreal City” fragment of *The Waste Land*, which itself concludes Part I of the poem, take on new significance if we continue to trace them against the backdrop of Ezekiel 8-11. In effect, the increasing abominations that lead to the eventual destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, in addition to the departure of God’s glory from the temple in Jerusalem, provide insight into the continued movement of *The Waste Land*. Like Ezekiel 8-11, Parts II and III of Eliot’s poem show the increasing destruction and desolation of the Waste Land.

Part II of the poem, “A Game of Chess,” projects this destruction and desolation of the Waste Land through a set of fragments that focus on unfruitful and illicit relationships. The first exchange moves us from the city streets of London, which are depicted throughout Part I of the poem, into the boudoir of two presumed lovers. The section begins with a scene of beauty that is uncharacteristic of the Waste Land: “The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Glowed on the marble” (77-8), while light reflects “upon the table as / The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it” (83-4). The scene quickly changes, however. “Synthetic perfumes” trouble, confuse, and drown the “sense in odours” (87-9), as “[t]he change of Philomel, by the barbarous king / So rudely forced” (99-100) and “other withered stumps of time” (104) are revealed on the walls. A dramatic dialogue unfolds as the woman of the gleaming chair presses for conversation with the man who is with her. The exchange begins:

“My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

“Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.

“What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

“I never know what you are thinking. Think.” (111-4)

While the man does not respond directly to the statements issued by the woman, we are privy to

his internal response as he listens to the woman speak: “I think we are in rats’ alley / Where dead men lost their bones” (115-6). The man’s lack of answer further unnerves the woman, who then begins questioning him about noises that are just the wind, noises that are “nothing” (117-20). ““Do / You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember / Nothing?”” she continues (121-3). And he answers again, if only in his mind: “I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes” (124-5). This last line bespeaks death, by way of the Tarot pack, Madame Sosostris, and the eventually-drowned Phoenician sailor to whom we are introduced in “The Burial of the Dead.” The muddled, quasi-conversation continues, and the fragment ends with a desperate tone: “And we shall play a game of chess / Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door” (137-8). Their watchful eyes await the arrival of death—a visitor altogether grim.

The identification by the poem’s protagonist of this place as “rats’ alley / Where dead men lost their bones” (115-6) recalls the dead carcasses and scattered bones of the Israelites (cf. Ezekiel 6:2). Moreover, the perpetual wait for death hearkens back to Ezekiel’s warning of imminent death for those who have turned against Yahweh: like those awaiting the hand of the divine executioners (cf. Ezek. 9:2-7), the inhabitants of *The Waste Land* await nothing other than death itself.

The scene within the poem turns to a conversation in a London pub, where we find another fragment that shows the destruction and desolation of the Waste Land and its inhabitants. This segment of the poem presents two women engaged in a one-sided discussion through which both sexual and spiritual sterility are evident. As the ironically-dubbed “sweet ladies” (172) sit at a pub table, speaking with a Cockney accent of East End London, their talk reveals the barrenness of life in the Waste Land. “He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time, / And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said” (148-9). The speaker continues:

You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)

I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.

(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.

You are a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don't want children? (156-164)

Brooks calls this a "picture of spiritual emptiness" (*The Waste Land: An Analysis* 195).

Marriage is unfulfilling, sexual exchanges are purposeless and perfunctory, and fidelity is questionable. Children are not the result of a man and woman's deep-seated love for one another, nor are they the result of true passion. Rather, they are merely a result of "a good time" (148). Moreover, the person with whom one engages in a sexual exchange is really inconsequential. One man or woman is interchangeable with another. Life in the Waste Land is lived by rote, emotionless and without meaning—it is the same here as it is for those inhabitants of the previous section's "Unreal City" (60).

This meaningless existence in the Waste Land, illustrated here by sterile sexuality, has an important connection to the Book of Ezekiel. John Kutsko argues that, according to the Book of Ezekiel, "Idolatry is the quintessential cause of the Babylonian exile" (qtd. in Day 21). John Day adds, "The sin of idolatry was the primary reason for God's judgment on Israel—whether idolatry at the high places (chap. 6), idolatry in the temple (chap. 8), or idolatry in the heart (chap. 14). Of all the sins God condemns and people commit, idolatry is the root sin, the sin that

explains all others” (Day 21). It is notable that Ezekiel, within his prophecy, uses an analogue for this idolatry: harlotry (cf. Ezek. 16 and 23). Ezekiel is not alone among the prophets in terms of this analogue; Isaiah, Jeremiah and others use similar imagery. Florence Jones picks up on Jeremiah’s use of harlotry and connects it with *The Waste Land*, while analyzing other thematic parallels to Jeremiah including the images of the vine and the wasteland. Jones notes, “in [Israel’s] perversity she became a harlot and adulteress” (288). Nevertheless, through the analogue of harlotry, Ezekiel himself describes the implications for the Israelites’ wrongdoing. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot takes up and reframes Ezekiel’s analogue; through the sexual depravity depicted in Part II of the poem, Eliot further advances the spiritual sterility portrayed earlier in the poem.

The sexual depravity introduced in Part II of the poem extends into Part III as we find that “[t]he river’s tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf / Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind / Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed” (174-6). The poem’s speaker sits and weeps, lamenting “[b]y the waters of Lemn” (182). This lament recalls the Psalm of David as he considers the Israelite’s Babylonian Exile: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion” (Ps. 137:1). For the poem’s speaker, in the Waste Land, no solace comes. What does come however, through a “blast” of cold wind, is “[t]he rattle of the bones” (185-6). This rattling of bones is a preemptive allusion to Eliot’s use of Ezekiel 37 in Part V, “What the Thunder Said.” But here the bones, rattled only by the movement of a rat, continue to point out the destruction and desolation of the Waste Land by calling attention to the slain bodies that are its victims.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation

Dragging its slimy belly on the bank

.....

White bodies naked on the low damp ground
 And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
 Rattled by the rat's foot only, from year to year. (187-8, 193-5)

By this point, these rattled bones might be considered a leitmotif of the poem. Their presence here certainly recalls the lost bones of the dead men in “rats’ alley” (115), and thus they also connect to the slain bodies scattered throughout the destroyed city in Ezekiel as well.

After the next few fragments of the poem, we find ourselves once again in the “Unreal City” (207), where Mr. Eugenides invites the poem’s speaker to “luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel / Followed by a weekend at the Metropole” (213-4). Through this passage, sexual depravity and barrenness within the Waste Land are reinforced. The invitation does not—indeed, could not—breed life through its would-be “homosexual debauch,” but depicts the same “sterility” evidenced elsewhere in the poem (Brooks, “Analysis” 197). The passages that follow the Mr. Eugenides segment of the poem carry on this theme. Through both the tea-time tryst between the clerk and the typist and the songs of the Thames-daughters, Eliot extends the harlotry image to the extreme, thereby reinforcing the sterility and the despair and desolation of life in the Waste Land.

Part IV of *The Waste Land* is a short fragment depicting the death of Phlebas the Phoenician and serves as an ultimate reminder of destruction in the Waste Land. We are challenged to remember Phlebas, who is “a fortnight dead” (312). As we do so, we are reminded of our own mortality. Harriet Davidson, in her essay “Reading *The Waste Land*,” calls this short section of Eliot’s poem—which is titled “Death By Water”—a *memento mori* (129). Clearly depicted, through the death of Phlebas, is the sense that humankind is mortal—all will enter the

“whirlpool” where the under-sea currents will pick their bones in whispers (318). Again reminded of the slain bodies and bones in Ezekiel, we continue to see the destruction and desolation of the Waste Land.

While the connections between Ezekiel and Parts II, III, and IV of *The Waste Land* might be explored further, those explicated here can be seen as important parallels between Ezekiel 8-11 and the poem. In Ezekiel, we read of the abominations committed by the Israelite people, and we ultimately find that the consequences of these abominations are death and destruction. In *The Waste Land*, too, we find death and destruction for its inhabitants.

Ezekiel's Third Vision: The Valley of the Dry Bones

Ezekiel 37, the third vision passage within the Book of Ezekiel, also bears exploration alongside *The Waste Land*. As Ezekiel 37 begins, Ezekiel sees a vision of dry bones scattered throughout a valley. In the vision, these bones come to life and are eventually fully restored and rejuvenated. The significance of Ezekiel 37 in terms of our reading of *The Waste Land* should not be underestimated. Thus, I quote at length:

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said to me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring

up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army. (Ezek. 37:1-10)

This vision, and its corresponding message to the Israelites, is offered against a backdrop of despair. Prior to the receipt of this divine word, the Israelites' outlook is grim. The extent of their despair becomes clear through a further exchange between the Lord and Ezekiel, albeit still within the prophet's vision: "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts" (Ezek. 37:11). Despite its perceived tenor, however, the message for the Israelites actually includes encouragement and hope; it provides the people of Israel the promise of redemption. The Lord clarifies for Ezekiel the meaning of the vision through one further exchange. The Lord says to Ezekiel:

Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. (Ezek. 37:12-14)

Commentators agree that this vision segment is issued in order to offer hope to the Israelites. One exegete, Alex Luc, says this very plainly: “Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of the bones . . . was one of his important messages of hope to the exiles” (142). Another, Michael Fox, frames the point similarly: “The vision of the valley of the bones is a message of encouragement. Hope has become essential . . .” (6). The Lord’s question “Son of man, can these bones live?” issued in Ezekiel 37:3 is rhetorical, as evidenced through the Lord’s explanation of the vision to Ezekiel. Albeit implied, the resounding answer issued by Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, is “Yes! These bones can live!” While Ezekiel and the Israelites might have thought the answer to be no, it was actually yes. With an understanding of the message of hope that this vision passage provides the Israelites, we must explore how this vision in Ezekiel 37 informs the reading of *The Waste Land*.

Up to this point in the poem, any allusion to Ezekiel’s dry bones within *The Waste Land* has reinforced the destruction and desolation that the Waste Land inhabitants face. As noted above, the rattle of the bones found at the beginning of “The Fire Sermon” highlights only the slain bodies that lie scattered on the ground and in the watchtower (cf. 185-195). In fact, from that reference forward, what we read of in *The Waste Land* seems to portray only increasing destruction for the Waste Land and its inhabitants.

This destruction culminates in Part V of *The Waste Land*, “What the Thunder Said.” As Part V begins, we find that “He who was living is now dead” (328) and “We who are living are now dying” (329). “There is no water but only rock” (331-334). The “dry sterile thunder without

rain” (342) is heard in the distance. “The city over the mountains / Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air” (371-2). In fact, the city collapses and degenerates completely:

Falling towers

Jerusalem Athens Alexandria

Vienna London

Unreal (373-6)

Like the city in Ezekiel, the city in *The Waste Land* bears total destruction by way of its falling towers. Importantly, this section links Jerusalem to London and thereby reframes the context of the earlier “Unreal City,” initially found in line 60, and at the same time reinforces the poem’s connection with Ezekiel. As Jerusalem and London conflate into one city, we are transported through Eliot’s next fragment to the mountain within the desert:

In this decayed hole among the mountains

In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing

Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel

There is the empty chapel, only the wind’s home.

It has no windows, and the door swings,

Dry bones can harm no one.

Only a cock stood on the rooftree

Co co rico co co rico

In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust

Bringing rain (385-394)

Finally here, in line 394 of the poem, we see a glimpse of hope for those in the Waste Land. The rain is coming. Once again, we are reminded of Ezekiel through the leitmotif of the bones: in line

390, “the epithet ‘dry’ allied to ‘bones’ points directly to Ezekiel” (Thormählen 43-4). However, here we see the potential for redemption and restoration. The hope present in Ezekiel, as represented symbolically through the vision of the dry bones, seems also to be offered to those in the Waste Land. Recall the thrust of Ezekiel 37:12-14, as discussed above: through the vision of the valley of the dry bones, God provides the Israelites with the message that they are to be restored. Their bones will be raised from their graves, and life will be theirs once again.

Lines 385-394 of *The Waste Land* offer an important opportunity to extend the discussion relating to Ezekiel’s vision. If we review the latter part of Ezekiel 11, which comes after the pronouncement of destruction that Yahweh issues to Israel through Ezekiel’s second vision, we find a promise of restoration for the people of Israel. The Lord is speaking to Ezekiel as Verse 17 begins:

Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezek. 11:17-20)

God promises, even though destruction is imminent for a time, that healing will come to the people of Israel. Without moving this discussion too far from our discussion of the dry bones, it is notable to mention that the Hebrew word for the new “spirit” that is promised to the Israelites is *rúah*. In Ezekiel 37, we find a curious passage if read in light of this passage from Ezekiel 11.

As noted above, Ezekiel 37:9-10 suggests that Ezekiel is to beckon the wind in order to stir the dry bones of the valley back to life. When Ezekiel does proceed according to the command of Yahweh, breath enters the dry bones that are scattered throughout the valley, and they come to life. As Ezekiel reports the vision, Yahweh then explains to the prophet that his vision signifies the giving of God's Spirit to the Israelites. In other words, when the graves are opened and the breath comes, the Israelites are restored (cf. Ezek. 11:11-14). The new spirit and new heart promised in Ezekiel 11 that come through the breath or the wind—again signified by the Hebrew word *rūah*—are the same as those which are promised in Ezekiel 37. Said more directly, in Ezekiel 11 God promises the Israelites a new *rūah* (spirit), and in Ezekiel 37 God provides them with a new *rūah* (spirit) through His own *rūah* (breath/wind). It is worth noting that the first readers of Ezekiel 37 would not consider the promise of restoration provided through Ezekiel's vision of valley of the dry bones without recalling the promise of the new spirit, the new heart that was pledged to them in Ezekiel 11.

Not surprisingly, as we trace the poem alongside Ezekiel, we see that the wind is present alongside the dry bones of *The Waste Land* as well. It is particularly evident in lines 385-394, where we read also of the coming rain. The wind that ushers in despair in the earliest lines of *The Waste Land*, “*Frisch weht der Wind*” (31), the wind that is “Nothing” (120) alongside the dead men of rats' alley (115-6), the wind that prompts the “rattle of the bones” through the “cold blast” (185-6), the “southwest wind” that carries the sound of bells down the river (286-8), now causes the grass to sing “Over the tumbled graves” (386-7). Moreover, the wind finds its home in the “empty chapel” (388), where the door swings open and closed at its command (389). Here the wind is, as Lockerd says, “breath, spirit . . . the element of spiritual transformation” (166).

This passage of *The Waste Land* culminates with the assertion that “[d]ry bones can harm

no one” (390). While Thormählen agrees that the wind here “suggests the breath of God bestowing life on the dead” (44), she does not believe that line 390 can be read in a positive way. She considers the statement by the poem’s speaker as an acceptance of a failure of sorts; through it, she says, the poem’s speaker rejects redemption even while acknowledging “the implied possibility of regeneration” (44). However, if we take line 390 in the full context of Ezekiel 37, the perspective is less hopeless. In Ezekiel 37:10, the slain Israelites scattered across the valley are spurred to life through the power of the wind. Even those bones, while characterized as an “exceeding great army” (Ezek. 37:10), cannot harm anyone—for indeed, they are only a metaphorical representation of an army. Yet that army is meant to signify the restoration of Israel (cf. Ezek. 11:10), and the promise of redemption is offered through the vision of the bones. In *The Waste Land*, a similar restoration is promised alongside dry bones that can harm no one, for then, and then only, comes “a damp gust / Bringing rain” (393-4). Again, this gust is linked with the Holy Spirit: according to Lockerd, it is a “spiritual wind blowing whither it will” (188).

The passage immediately following, lines 395-422 of Part V of *The Waste Land*’s “What The Thunder Said,” reports in peals of thunder a message for the Waste Land prophet. However, the section begins with a reminder of the desolation and depravity of the Waste Land:

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
 Waited for rain, while the black clouds
 Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
 The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
 Then spoke the thunder. (395-9)

In the lines that follow, the thunder speaks “DA” (400). It is worth noting that the thunder itself says “DA” and “DA” alone (cf. 410 and 417). However, what the poem’s protagonist hears from

the first issue of the thunder is “*Datta*” (401). Eliot translates this in his note as “give” (*The Waste Land* 97). A few lines later, the thunder again says “DA” (410), but this time the poem’s protagonist hears “*Dayadhvam*,” meaning “sympathize” (*The Waste Land* 97). And finally, the thunder says “DA,” and the protagonist hears “*Damyata*,” which is translated by Eliot as “control” (*The Waste Land* 97). Eliot points to the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* as the origin of and source for the DAs of the thunder, as detailed in his note to line 401 of the poem. So commonly recounted is the story told within the Upanishads that I will not repeat it here. What must be accounted for is that while the thunder speaks “DA” three times over, the voice of the thunder is heard by the protagonist—or interpreted, we might say—as “give,” “sympathize,” and “control.” The poem concludes shortly after the thunder speaks. In line 432, the penultimate line of *The Waste Land*, the poem’s speaker repeats what is heard from the thunder. However, here the words appear as a composite assertion—“Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.” This line leads to the poem’s final line, which reads “Shantih Shantih Shantih” (433). We know from Eliot’s notes that this final line carries a particular gloss in his mind. He says of the word *shantih*: “Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. ‘The Peace which passeth understanding’ is our equivalent to this word” (*The Waste Land* 98). The poem’s conclusion, albeit with a foreign rendering of a biblical definition for peace (cf. Phil. 4:7), seems positive. Yet the full positive thrust of this concluding segment cannot be understood without exploring further its connections with Ezekiel.

Ezekiel’s Fourth Vision: The Restoration of the Land

After the poem’s speaker hears and interprets the voice of thunder, we find the tone of the poem to be in stark contrast to its earlier segments. The speaker says, “I sat upon the shore /

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me / Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (423-5). These lines, together with lines 395-422, parallel Ezekiel's final vision passage, which is detailed in Ezekiel chapters 40-48. Here, Ezekiel sees a vision of the restoration of the city of Jerusalem and the return of God's presence to His temple. Chapters 40 through 42 describe in great detail the structure and measurements of the restored temple; thus the details of those chapters have minimal bearing on our reading of *The Waste Land*. However, one part of Ezekiel 43 is notable. Ezekiel reports, "Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like the voice of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory . . . And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east" (Ezek. 43:1-2, 4). Ezekiel's vision indicates that the glory of Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, returns to the land of the Israelites and inhabits the temple. Again he dwells amidst his chosen people, the fully-restored Hebrews, who have been given a new heart through the Spirit of God. After further description of the temple, Ezekiel views water flowing from the base of the temple into the restored land:

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and let me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the

ankles. (Ezek. 47:1-3)

The water that Ezekiel sees grows progressively deeper and wider as the vision unfolds. The water rises to a depth of the loins (cf. Ezek. 47:4), becomes deep enough to swim in (Ezek. 47:5), and then becomes sufficient to provide sustenance for many trees (Ezek. 47:7). The river is so restorative that all living things in its proximity will thrive. “And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live: and there shall be a great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every living thing shall live whither the river cometh” (Ezek. 47:9). The effect of the river on everything around it is surely extreme.

While the first nine verses of Ezekiel 47 are notable and provide important points of comparison between Ezekiel’s final vision passage and *The Waste Land*, their importance becomes even more pronounced when we consider Ezekiel 47:10 as well. “And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.” Lines 423-4 of the poem are worth repeating here, for their significance in the reading Eliot’s poem cannot be underestimated: “I sat upon the shore / Fishing, with the arid plain behind me.” Just as Ezekiel’s desert is restored, through the healing water that flows from the temple to which the Spirit has returned, so too does the desert of the Waste Land seem to be restored. The poem’s speaker is fishing, like the fishermen of Ezekiel’s vision, and the desert is behind him. The word *behind* in line 424 should perhaps be read as figurative rather than literal. The poem’s speaker has not traversed the desert and found himself arriving at a river in which he should fish. Rather, the poem’s speaker has traversed the desert and is declaring that—after hearing the voice of the divine and interpreting the message of the thunder—he is in the desert

no more. It is through the voice of the thunder, and through a response to that voice, that the Waste Land can be experienced as a place not only of destruction and desolation. The lines that precede this section of the poem seem to lead toward this restoration, albeit yet unrealized:

. . . The boat responded
 Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
 The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
 Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
 To controlling hands (418-22)

The speaker might be saying through these lines “Your heart would have responded gaily, *as mine did*, when invited.” But we have to read what is actually in the poem rather than rely on implication or inference. What cannot be disputed is that the speaker asserts his presence, at the conclusion of *The Waste Land*, in a landscape that is altogether different from that which is evident earlier in the poem. No longer is there “no water but only rock” (331); there is now water, and the speaker is “[f]ishing, with the arid plain behind” him (424). Read alongside Ezekiel 47, this speaks powerfully of the degree to which the Waste Land affords the potential of restoration for its inhabitants.

Critics typically connect the next line *The Waste Land*, line 425, to Isaiah 38. As noted above, the line reads “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” The borrowing is clear; for the biblical passage in Isaiah reads, “In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live” (Isa. 38:1). Brian Southam is one critic who cites Eliot’s biblical allusion here. Southam asks us to compare line 425 with “the words of the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah, a sick man whose kingdom lies waste under Assyrian conquest” (196). He

also notes that “Hezekiah prays for mercy and God answers him, promising to deliver his country from the Assyrians and granting him a further fifteen years of life” (196). This treatment of this section of the poem is typical, and there are two points worth making in response to this perspective. The first is that Hezekiah lives—or, said differently, that Hezekiah does not die. Readers of *The Waste Land* sometimes argue that the poem’s biblical echo here in line 425 reinforces the despair and despondency expressed up to this point within the poem and, in effect, claim that this is a last straw of sorts—that the poem’s speaker has lost all hope and that the poem then ends with the ramblings of a despondent and dejected protagonist. For example, Michael Holt notes that line 425 “indicates a certain amount of hedging” on the part of the poem’s protagonist, saying that “the act of settling one’s lands in order implies a preparation for death” (27). However, acknowledging that Hezekiah lives adds to a hopeful reading of the poem.

The second point worth making in response to the commentary related to line 425 of *The Waste Land* stems from what we know of Hezekiah through 2 Kings 20. The first verse of 2 Kings 20 recounts the story of Hezekiah the very same way that Isaiah 38:1 does—Hezekiah is warned to order his house for his death is imminent. However, the 2 Kings narrative provides some context that Isaiah does not. After Hezekiah is healed, he himself brings water into the city in order to restore it. “And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?” (2 Kings 20:20). This is also the case in *The Waste Land*; water returns and the possibility of restoration is evident.

Like Joyce in *Ulysses*, Eliot takes up in *The Waste Land* a method of “manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity” (“‘*Ulysses*,’ Order, and Myth,” 177). For Eliot, this parallel was built through the adaptation of a biblical framework which

closely connects with the Book of Ezekiel. Indeed, the four vision passages can be read as parallels of *The Waste Land* and thus inform our reading of the poem in important ways.

Chapter 5: Eliot as Poet-Prophet

According to one scholar, “The task of the poet-prophet begins with the ability to grieve and cry out—to bring people to confront their experiences of suffering. The [poet-prophet] does this by offering symbols which bring to public expression the very fears which have been denied and suppressed” (Downing 102n). If we accept this as what a poet-prophet does, then we can say fairly easily that Eliot participates in the poet-prophet role through *The Waste Land*. Edmund Wilson, one of the earliest literary critics to review Eliot’s poem, notes the way in which Eliot cries out for the people of his time:

And sometimes we feel that [Eliot] is speaking not only for a personal distress, but for the starvation of a whole civilization—for people grinding at barren office-routine in the cells of gigantic cities, drying up their souls in eternal toil whose products never bring them profit, where their pleasures are so vulgar and so feeble that they are almost sadder than their pains . . . It is the world in which the pursuit of grace and beauty is something which is felt to be obsolete. . . . (“The Poetry of Drouth” 616)

That it is in the poet’s grasp to represent the people of his or her time in this way is not an idea that Eliot opposed. He notes, in his essay *In Memoriam*, which was written in response to Tennyson’s work of the same name, “It happens now and then that a poet by some strange accident expresses the mood of his generation” (243).

In a way, these ideas support the supposition that *The Waste Land* parallels the first of three fundamental components of prophecy as identified by theologian Richard Baukham. He says that prophecy is first a “discernment of the contemporary situation by prophetic insight” (148). Cleanth Brooks, in a 1989 essay considering the prophetic nature of *The Waste Land*,

discusses Eliot's discernment of the ailments of the modern age, and argues further that the "infection [Eliot] sensed in Western culture early in the century has gone on apace" since Eliot published the poem in 1922 ("*The Waste Land: A Prophetic Document*" 330). He concludes that while "[t]he poet doesn't set up to be a fortuneteller . . . he often records psychic disturbances and changes in the cultural climate that may become serious problems later on" (332). So, says Brooks, "can we fairly say that whatever Eliot's conscious intention, *The Waste Land* is a prophetic poem? I think we can, particularly if we remember what the word originally meant: an utterance of a deep and important truth, often thought of as divinely inspired" (331).

The Waste Land is prophetic in ways beyond those identified by Brooks, however. For the poet-prophet also serves as "a voice that shatters settled reality and evokes new possibility in the listening assembly" (Brueggemann 4). This new possibility, we might say, is connected with the second of the three elements of prophecy defined by Baukham, which is "prediction" or "seeing how . . . the situation must change" in order for things to improve (149). In *The Waste Land*, seeing how the situation must change comes through the poet's reminder of the potential for the destruction of the city at the close of the poem, if indeed the voice of the thunder is not followed: "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down" (426). If those in the Waste Land follow the voice of the thunder—or give, sympathize, and control—order may be restored. This leads toward the final element of prophecy.

According to Baukham, the third element of prophecy is a call for the hearers to respond. "[P]rophecy demands of its hearers," he says, "an appropriate response to its perception of the truth of the contemporary world and its prediction of what [it] must mean for the contemporary world" (149). The response demanded by the prediction of the truth of the contemporary world in *The Waste Land* is evident through the interpretation of what the thunder says. Notably, the

prophet in Ezekiel is only permitted to speak—to project the prophecy of Yahweh—after the city of Jerusalem is destroyed and his tongue is loosened. Stephen Tuell brings this to bear in his commentary on Ezekiel. Of Ezekiel's limitations to speak early on in his prophetic role, Tuell says, "the meaning of Ezekiel's muteness is connected to Jerusalem's fall: only after the city has fallen is Ezekiel 'no longer unable to speak'" (295). He clarifies this point, noting that "Ezekiel's 'muteness' . . . involves a restriction to his prophetic role . . . Once Jerusalem lies in ruins, Ezekiel's mouth is opened, so he may speak freely" (Tuell 296). Like Ezekiel, the mouth of the protagonist in *The Waste Land* is opened after the destruction of the city. Then and only then, through his interpretation of the voice of the thunder, do we find that the protagonist speaks freely and thereby fulfills his prophetic role.

Through *The Waste Land*, Eliot stands as a poet-prophet, discerning his contemporary situation through insight and inspiration. He represents how the situation must change if things are to improve, and likewise he demands a response. He does not do this, however, without providing us with a preliminary answer for what that response should be: we too must wrestle with and respond when we read the admonition to give, sympathize, and control. Reading *The Waste Land* alongside Ezekiel helps us understand how Eliot worked to order and find meaning in the world.

Eliot once said, "I would hesitate to make myself a prophet" (qtd. in Paul 14). However, he conceded that the prophetic is often a part of the poet's message. Indeed, he continued his comment by saying, "In any case, you see, the prophetic element in poetry very often is unconscious in the poet himself. He may be prophesying without knowing it" (14). Regardless of intent or admission, Eliot fills the poet-prophet role through *The Waste Land*.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Allan Johnson argues that the “true analytical challenge of *The Waste Land*” comes through our struggle to answer a few important questions. He asks, “How much, if at all, are we meant to interpret, rationalize, and categorize the ‘heap of broken images’ and disjointed voices that constitute the poem? What, if anything, can grow out of the infertile wasteland of ‘this stony rubbish’?” Johnson claims that these questions remain “unanswerable,” saying that while “many inhabitants of the wasteland struggle to find coherence and order within their fractured worlds . . . no such order can ever be found” (79). However, reading the poem as we have done, we find that Eliot does actually provide something—a way out of the stony rubbish of *The Waste Land*.

In “Towards a Christian Britain,” Eliot said this:

[A Christian Britain] will appear in the lives of the prophets—men who have not merely kept the faith through the dark age, but who have lived through the mind of that dark age, and got beyond it. The Christian prophets are not always recognized in their lives: or they may be stoned, or slain between the temple and the altar: but it is through them that God works to convert the habits of feeling and thinking, of desiring and willing, to which we are all more enslaved than we know. (525)

Through his work, “Eliot took up a stance . . . of pilgrim, of prophet, and preacher” (Gordon 232). Eliot himself got beyond the mind of the dark age, and *The Waste Land* is evidence of his struggle to do so. Notably, through *The Waste Land*, Eliot offers us an idea of how to get beyond the mind of the dark age as well.

Eliot was a prophet, like many of those whom he emulated. Through *The Waste Land*, he worked to order and give meaning to the world. By taking up and adapting the themes and

images of the prophets, he worked out his own method or “way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (“*Ulysses, Order, and Myth,*” 177). And through his admonition to give, sympathize, and control, Eliot declares a way for us to realize that life has meaning. In this, *The Waste Land* serves as a precursor to that point when Eliot would finally find a comprehensive way to accept the coherence of and order that ultimately governs this world.

With the help of the prophet Ezekiel, Eliot offers us—out of the stony rubbish of *The Waste Land*—an early glimpse of how we can take the first steps toward that place he identifies at the close of “Little Gidding,” the last of his *Four Quartets*. Then, for us too,

[T]he end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And to know the place for the first time.

 A condition of complete simplicity
 (Costing not less than everything)
 And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one. (188-190, 201-207)

Works Cited

- Aiken, Conrad. "An Anatomy of Melancholy." *The Waste Land: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*. Ed. Michael North. New York: Norton & Company, 2001. 148-152.
- Baukham, Richard. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- Bible. King James Version. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983.
- Bedient, Calvin. *He Do the Police in Different Voices*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Block, Daniel. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Brooker, Jewel Spears, and Joseph Bentley. *Reading The Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.
- Brooks, Jr., Cleanth. "The Waste Land: An Analysis." *The Waste Land: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*. Ed. Michael North. New York: Norton & Company, 2001. 185-210.
- . "The Waste Land: A Prophetic Document." *Yale Review* 78.2 (1989): 318-332.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Finally Comes the Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989.
- Bullock, C. Hassell. "Ezekiel, Bridge Between the Testaments." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25.1 (1982): 23-31.
- Bush, Ronald. *T.S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984.
- Cargill, Oscar. "Fear in a Handful of Dust." *Criticism* 11.3 (1969): 275-296.
- Collins, John Joseph. "Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in the Book of Daniel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93.1 (1974): 50-66.
- Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York, Everyman's Library-Knopf, 1995.

- Davidson, Harriet. "Reading *The Waste Land*." *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*. Ed. A. David Moody. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- Day, John. "Ezekiel and the Heart of Idolatry." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164.653 (2007): 21-33.
- Diemert, Brian. "The Trials of Astrology in T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land': A Gloss on Lines 57-59." *Journal of Modern Literature* 22.1 (1998): 175-181.
- Downing, Frederick. "A Contemporary Dialogue on Race: Ernest Gains and the Writer as Poet-Prophet." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36.1 (2009): 101-113.
- Eliot, T.S. *Four Quartets. The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1980. 116-145.
- . "In Memoriam". 1936. *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, Ed. Frank Kermode. San Diego: Harvest-Harcourt, Inc., 1975. 239-247.
- . "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." 1915. *Collected Poems*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936. 11-17.
- . Rev. of *Baudelaire and the Symbolists*, by Peter Quennell. *The Criterion*. 9.35 (1930): 357-359.
- . "Towards a Christian Britain." *The Listener* (April 10, 1941): 524-525.
- . "'Ulysses,' Order, and Myth." 1923. *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. San Diego: Harvest-Harcourt, Inc., 1975. 175-178.
- . "Virgil and the Christian World." 1951. *On Poetry and Poets*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957. 135-148.
- . *The Waste Land*. 1922. *Collected Poems*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936. 67-98.
- . *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the*

- Annotations of Ezra Pound*. Ed. Valerie Eliot. San Diego: Harvest-Harcourt, Inc., 1971.
- Ferber, Michael. "Spring." *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Fox, Michael. "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 51 (1980), 1-15.
- Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough*. New York: Macmillan, 1951.
- Freedman, David Noel. "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96.1 (1977), 5-26.
- Gordon, Lyndall. *T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life*. New York: Norton & Company, 1998.
- Helmling, Steven. "The Grin of Tiresias: Humor in *The Waste Land*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 36.2 (1990), 137-154.
- Holt, Michael. "Hope and Fear: Tension in *The Waste Land*." *College Literature* 8.1 (1981), 21-32.
- Johnson, Allan. "Voices and Language in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*." *Critical Insights: T.S. Eliot*. Ed. John Paul Riquelme. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 2010. 74-89.
- Jones, Florence. "T.S. Eliot Among the Prophets." *American Literature* 38.3 (1966), 285-302.
- Kenner, Hugh. "The Urban Apocalypse." *Eliot in His Time: Essays on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of The Waste Land*. Ed. A. Walton Litz. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1973. 23-49.
- Kirk, Russell. *Eliot and His Age: T.S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Random House, 1971.
- Kutsko, John. *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000.

- Lockerd, Benjamin. *Aethereal Rumours*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1998.
- Luc, Alex. "A Theology of Ezekiel: God's Name and Israel's History." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 26.2 (1983), 137-143.
- Margalit, Baruch. "The Meaning and Significance of Asherah." *Vetus Testamentum* 40.3 (1990), 264-297.
- Martin, Peter. "'Son of Man' in the Book of Ezekiel and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*." *Arizona Quarterly* 33 (1977), 197-215.
- Morgenstern, Julian. "'Son of Man' of Daniel 7:13f: A New Interpretation." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80.1 (1961): 65-77.
- North, Michael, ed. *The Waste Land: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*. By T. S. Eliot. 1922. New York: Norton & Company, 2001.
- Oser, Lee. "Charlotte Eliot and 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'." *Modern Philology* 94.2 (1996), 190-200.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. Frank Justus Miller. New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005.
- Paul, Leslie. "A Conversation with T.S. Eliot." *The Kenyon Review* 27.1 (1965), 11-21.
- Richardson, John. "After the Imagination of Our Own Hearts: Biblical Prophecy and *The Waste Land*." *English* 48 (1999): 187-198.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. 1845. *A Defense of Poetry*. Ed. Mary Shelley. Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1904.
- Sidney, Philip. *An Apology for Poetry*. 1595. Ed. Peter Herman. Glen Allen, VA: College Publishing, 2001.
- Smith, Grover. *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956.

Southam, Brian C. *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot*. 1968. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.

Symons, Arthur. *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. 1899. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1919.

Thormählen, Marianne. "Dry Bones Can Harm No One: Ezekiel XXXVII in *The Waste Land V* and *Ash-Wednesday II*." *English Studies* 65.1 (1984): 39-47.

Tuell, Stephen. "Should Ezekiel Go to Rehab? The Method to Ezekiel's 'Madness.'" *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36.3 (2009): 289-302.

Unger, Leonard. *T.S. Eliot: Moments and Patterns*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

Ward, David. *T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds: A Reading of T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

Wilson, Edmund. "The Poetry of Drouth." *The Dial* 73 (December 1922): 611-616.

Wilson, Robert. "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel." *Interpretation* 38.2 (1984): 117-130.

Works Consulted

- Ackroyd, Peter. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.
- Askowith, Dora. "Ezekiel and St. Augustine: A Comparative Study." *Journal of Bible and Religion* 15.4 (1947): 224-227.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Cook, Cornelia. "Fire and Spirit: Scripture's Shaping Presence in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*." *Literature & Theology* 15.1 (2001): 85-101.
- - -. "The Hidden Apocalypse: T.S. Eliot's Early Work." *Literature & Theology* 10.1 (1996): 68-80.
- Howarth, Herbert. *Notes on Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964.
- McLuhan, Marshall. "Pound, Eliot, and the Rhetoric of *The Waste Land*." *New Literary History* 10.3 (1979): 557-580.
- Miller, Milton. "What the Thunder Meant." *ELH* 36.2 (1969): 440-454.
- Moody, A. David. *Tracing T.S. Eliot's Spirit: Essays on His Poetry and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Patea, Viorica. "T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and the Poetics of the Mythical Method." *Modernism Revisited: Transgressing Boundaries and Strategies of Renewal in American Poetry*. New York: Rodopi, 2007. 91-110.
- Raine, Craig. *T.S. Eliot*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.
- Reeves, Gareth. "*The Waste Land* and the *Aeneid*." *The Modern Language Review* 82.3 (1987): 555-572.
- Weston, Jessie. *From Ritual to Romance*. 1920. New York, Cosimo: 2005.