

## **The Fantasy and Symbolism of Religious Poetry: A Case Study of *The Waste Land*, *Paradise Lost* and *Prometheus Unbound***

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### **Abstract**

Symbols in the religious poetry provide readers with a lot of indecisive spots and blanks, which are like windows in an attic for the light to enter and through which to look outside. Symbolism helps readers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of religious poetry, through which they are enlightened. Love, hate, joy, sadness, pride, shame, hope, fear, lust, boredom, surprise, embarrassment, guilt, jealousy, and disgust are among the powerful feelings that color and animate our daily lives. All these feelings are actually some concrete reflection of emotion, which is an internal psychological arousal, an expressive behavior in the face and body, and a cognitive appraisal. The internal psychological arousal caused by the reading of religious poems tends to drive readers into an ecstatic or a Chaos-like world where they reestablish their existence and ego through the reestablishment of their psychological state.

**Key Words:** Symbolism, Religious Poetry, Internal Psychological Arousal

### **I**

When B. C. Southam made comments on T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, he said:

*Eliot's immediate Waste Land is the world, as he saw it, after the First World War. The 'waste' is not, however, that of war's devastation and bloodshed, but the emotional and spiritual sterility of Western man, the waste of our civilization (1981: 81).*

What Southam stated here indicates that "Waste Land" is a symbol, by which the emotional and spiritual sterility of Western man has been revealed. Imagine if T. S. Eliot used a statement rather than a symbol to express the same concept, then that statement must have been very long and tedious, and hard to achieve such a shocking effect. Thus, we can come to the conclusion that "poetry moves us because of its symbolism" (Yeats, 1972: 34).

The word, "symbol", originates from Greek, symbolon, meaning that "a token of identity

(usually made out of wood) is to be verified by comparing its other half". Thus, symbol has two obvious traits: the one is the two wooden parts composed of the concept of symbol, the other is some information, such as friendship and trust, etc., expressed by the verified two wooden parts. With the development of civilization, the primitive symbol of this kind has evolved into a form representing some abstract concept. Although what is composed of symbol is the same, that is, the form and the concept the form wants to express, the idea of symbol is somewhat different. Now, the form is substantial and the concept is virtual, and accordingly the equal relationship between the two wooden parts has developed into a relationship between the principal and the subordinate (the concept is the principal and the form is subordinate). Symbol has long been a useful rhetoric method, a way of thinking and a way of existence since it can express some very subtle meaning and delicate thought that are hard to be conveyed in any other ways.

A symbol can express something metaphysical well, that is, it can deal with non-sensible entities or with things outside the scope of scientific method. Religious poetry deals a lot with metaphysical things, such as the existence of God, death and resurrection. All these are closely associated with a man's reactions of spirit and mind towards what has happened or will happen in a mysterious unknown world. T. S. Eliot, in his poem, *The Waste Land*, illustrates for us the concrete image of a spiritual draught with the help of metaphors, which are the language of indication, directly revealing something that is hard to express in our ordinary language and hence a sense of haziness. At the beginning of the poem, Eliot wrote:

*April is the cruelest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.. (The Waste Land, LI-7)*

Metaphorically, April is a season of reproduction, symbolizing the vitality of life. But Eliot's April is a anti-traditional April, which is the "cruelest month" of the year and forms a very contrast against 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:

*When that April with his showres soote  
The droughte of March hath perced to the roote,  
And bathe every veine in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flowr. (Chaucer, 1993:81)*

Not only Chaucer but many other poets regarded spring as the most cheerful season in the world. Why did T. S. Eliot want to describe April this way, bringing so much sadness to the readers? Because he wanted to focus on the theme, waste land. Because he wanted to show some subtle floating spirit between life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time and timeless, between order and disorder, truth and untruth, sense and senselessness of existence; between the virtues of openness toward the ground of being such as faith, hope and love and the vices of infolding closure such as hubris and revolt; between the

moods of joy and despair; and between alienation in its double meaning of alienation from the world and alienation from God (Brooks, 1995:p103). Thus, in the mind of T. S. Eliot, spring in the modern world is a symbol of death rather than that of vitality. At the very beginning of the poem, he has put forward the idea that “Our mother feedeth thus our little life,/ That we in turn may feed her with our death”.<sup>1</sup> Life and death are just like a main thread, along which many metaphors are strung to form colorful symbols, revealing the colorful spiritual world of human beings.

Because “April is the cruelest month” of the year, there is no reproduction. The sterility in reproduction has further devastated the man’s existing conditions, making the human world unreal city, in which the specter in broad daylight accosts the passerby.<sup>2</sup> The poem now brings readers a dream-like picture, and it lingers in their mind more like a dream than a poem, which makes itself both obscure and amusing. In the dreamy land, Eliot told a sad story:

*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 fixed his eyes before his feet.  
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours  
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine. (The Waste Land, L61-8)*

The whole sad story is told in fragments that seems to be stuck together into a whole, looking somewhat like a tortoise shell, leaving the “cracking traces” but still rather beautiful. When reading the poem, it is like watching a cloud. Though the cloud remains the same cloud, it changes its form repeatedly as one looks. Indeed, *The Waste Land* is one metaphor with a multiplicity of interpretations, and meanwhile it provides people with an agnostic world.

## II

Since symbolism reveals, in an intuitive way, the characteristics of the objects that cannot be known reasonably, it is unreasonable. Unreasonableness is one of the traits of symbolism. Based on the unreasonableness of the myths, the religious poetry is in essence unreasonable. Just because of the unreasonableness, symbols are necessary to be applied for the purpose of giving a clear explanation of existence in the inner world. When describing the spiritual waste land of modern men, T. S. Eliot applied the unreasonableness of symbolism to reveal their arid inner world:

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<sup>1</sup> These verses are from “To Our Ladies of Death” by James Thomson (1834-82), please refer to B. C. Southam’s *A Student’s Guide to The Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*. London: Faber and Faber, 1981, p87.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the original note by T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, in M. H. Abrams (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993, P2149.

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*Here is no water but only rock  
Rock and no water and the sandy road  
The road winding above among the mountains  
Which are mountains of rock without water  
If there were water we should stop and drink  
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think  
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit  
There is not even silence in the mountains  
But dry sterile thunder without rain  
There is not even solitude in the mountains  
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl  
From doors of mudcracked houses  
If there were water  
And no rock  
If there were rock  
And also water  
And water  
A spring  
A pool among the rock  
If there were the sound of water only  
Not the cicada  
And dry grass singing  
But sound of water over a rock  
Where the hermit thrush sings in the pine trees  
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
But there is no water (*The Waste Land*, L332-59)*

“Water” here is a symbol, indicating a religious belief or something like that that can provide people with the immortal source of spiritual vitality. A man's spirit is his will, which is reflected in the substantial world. It is somewhat a bit like the point of view of Arthur Schopenhauer, who explains the universe as “Will” unfolding itself in individuals. Will is not only a power of choice but also the blind unreasoning impulse toward self-preservation and the will-to-live. The world is the expression of Universal Will; individuals' wills produce their bodies as their phenomena. Thus, Schopenhauer thought that the body was the appearance of which will is the reality. That is to say, the body is only the symbol of the will, which is behind phenomena (Russell, 1948:p.783). In *The Waste Land*, behind water—the phenomena—is the spiritual reality of man, that is the will of man. If there is no water, or if water disappears, the spiritual reality of man also disappears, i.e. the will of man disappears. With the disappearance

of the will of men, their spiritual world will have been lost accordingly, and “all those phenomena are also abolished; that constant strain and effort without end and without rest at all the grades of objectivity in which and through which the world consists; the multifarious forms succeeding each other in gradation; the whole manifestation of the will; and, finally, also the universal forms of this manifestation, time and space, and also its last fundamental form, subject and object; all are abolished. No will: no idea, no world. Before us there is certainly only nothingness” (Russell, 1948:p.785). Nothingness is also the most important idea reflected in *The Waste Land*. When modern man has lost his spiritual world, he has to be accompanied by nothingness, and he lives only in an “Empty City”.

### III

“Empty City” is a “Swarming city, city full of dreams”,<sup>3</sup> that is, the “Empty City” is the art realm of dream and intoxication, driving readers into some ecstatic state. Once upon a time, Chuang Chou dreamed that he was a butterfly, a butterfly fluttering about, enjoying itself. It did not know that it was Chuang Chou. Suddenly he awoke with a start and he was Chuang Chou again. But he did not know whether he was Chuang Chou who had dreamed that he was a butterfly, or whether he was a butterfly dreaming that he was Chuang Chou (Chuang, 1966:p.73). The state of Chuang Chou then is called an ecstatic state, that is, a religious state in which the soul left his body and was united with Great Nature, therefore, he was not himself then but for the time being he was a part of Great Nature. Similarly, when a reader reads the religious poems, he may be attracted or charmed by some fascinating descriptions in them and completely forget himself by entering the poetic world, in which they are happy, sad, fearful, angry, and even shameful together with the characters in the religious poems as if they were living in that imagined world. If the reader enters a state like this when he reads the religious poems, we can say that he is in an ecstatic state, that is to say, he has entirely mixed himself into the spiritual world created in the religious poems.

It is very important to realize that we humans are intensely emotional, warm-blooded creatures. Love, hate, joy, sadness, pride, shame, hope, fear, lust, boredom, surprise, embarrassment, guilt, jealousy, and disgust are among the powerful feelings that color and animate our daily lives. All these feelings are actually some concrete reflection of emotion, which is an internal psychological arousal, an expressive behavior in the face and body, and a cognitive appraisal. The ecstatic state of religious-poetry readers is usually created by some emotion, exactly speaking, the religious poetic emotion.

The religious poetic emotion is first an internal psychological arousal in reader's mind. When a man reads a wonderful poem or a moving novel or watched an exciting film, he is more nervous than he thought he should be. When he reads these lines of verse, “What though the field be lost?/ All is not lost—the unconquerable will,/ And study of revenge, immortal hate,/

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to the original note by T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, in M. H. Abrams (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993, P2149.

And courage never to submit or yield:/ And what is else not be overcome” (*Paradise Lose*, L105-9), he may feel his heart trembling and there is an emotion welling up in it. He can see at the moment a staunch, brave, and dauntless hero standing in front of him, presenting his views vehemently, and he is deeply moved. Is this a rare and unique experience? Not at all. Imagine what it feels like to fall head-over-heels in love, to suffer the death of a loved one, or to get cheated out of something you desperately wanted and felt you deserved. Then your soul is intimately involved in feelings of intense emotion. Common sense tells us that we smile because we are happy, cry because we are sad, clench our fists because we are angry, and tremble because we are afraid. Thus, if you are crossing the street and see a car speeding at you, that stimulus will trigger fear, which in turn will cause your heart to pound as you try to escape. The same happens to a person when he reads religious poems. The stimulus may trigger fear, anger, pity, sadness, and happiness, etc. in the course of reading. All these are the reader's psychological reactions, triggered by religious poetic emotions, towards the various religious poems.

The internal psychological arousal of a reader will at last be reflected in his face and body, the outward expressions of religious poetic emotion. Emotion may be an internal, purely subjective experience, but it also has an observable behavioral component. The links between our inner feelings and outward expressions are quite clear: We smile when we are happy, cry when we are sad, press our lips in anger, bow our heads in shame, and wrinkle our faces in disgust. Almost everyone has the experience of being moved to tears when he or she is reading a sad story. Tears are the very outward expression of his or her internal emotion. When seeing the miserable view of mankind shown by Michael, “Adam could not, but wept,/ Though not of woman born: compassion quelled/ His best of man, and gave him up to tears/ A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess” (*Paradise Lost XI*, L495-98), Adam's tears become the outward expression of his emotion caused by his internal psychological arousal. We know that if the reader really enters the ecstatic state in the process of reading the poem, he must cry together with Adam. Therefore, the behavioral expressions of emotion are a means of nonverbal communication, from which we can have a sense of the religious poetic emotions stirring inside the readers.

There is much more to emotion than internal psychological arousal and expressive behaviors. The heart pounds in fear, but it also pounds in anger. We cry out in grief over the death of a love one, but we also shed tears of joy at weddings and other happy occasions. In other words, there has to be more to grief and joy, etc. than arousal and expression. Schachter and Singer carried out a test of emotions by injecting male subjects with epinephrine, the hormone that produces physiological arousal. The subjects in one group were warned in advance about the side effects (they were drug-informed), but those in a second group were not (they were drug-uninformed). In a third group, the subjects were injected with a harmless placebo (this was the placebo control group). Before the drug actually took effect, subjects were left alone with a male confederate introduced as another subject who had received the same injection. In some cases, the confederate's behavior was euphoric: He bounced around happily, doodled on

paper, sank jump shots into the waste basket, flew paper airplanes across the room, and swung his hips in a hula hoop. In the presence of other subjects, the same confederate behaved angrily. Now, let's examine these various situations. In the drug-informed group, subjects began to feel their hearts pound, their hands shake, and their faces flush. In the placebo group, the subjects did not become aroused in the first place, so they had no symptoms to explain. In the drug-uninformed group, the subjects suddenly became aroused without knowing why. Trying to identify the sensations, these subjects would take their cues from others who were in the same situation, namely the confederate. Drug-uninformed subjects reported that they felt more happy or angry depending on the confederate's actions (Kassin, 1998:p.340). The same is true with the reaction of the reader in the process of reading religious poems.

Suppose that the readers are the subjects, the epinephrine is the religious poem and the confederate is the concrete behavior of some being in the religious poem, the readers who read the poem will be likely stirred and enter an ecstatic state, in which they may feel happy, angry, sad, etc. depending on the development or the change of the concrete behavior of some being in the religious poems. For example, when you read *Paradise Lost*, you may feel happy as Adam and Eve obeyed God's order and live an immortally happy life, but you may have felt sad, when they offended God and were driven out of Paradise. Thus, like epinephrine, the quality of a religious poem itself plays a decisive role in whether a reader could enter an ecstatic state with the help of psychological arousal. *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Waste Land* are unusually high-quality masterpieces, therefore, they possess the charming power to drive readers into the ecstatic state. With an injection of placebo, the subject is unlikely to be physiologically aroused; and with a mediocre religious poem, it is possible for the reader to be triggered to enter an ecstatic state.

#### IV

Generally speaking, in order to stir up some psychological arousal that can lead readers into ecstatic state in the process of reading religious poems, mystic experience is always indispensable. Religious fore-knowledge and religious yearning in readers themselves involves them in mystic experiences. Without any fore-knowledge about religion, a reader will find no clues that will help to stir up his psychological arousal in the process of his reading of the religious poems. He may feel indifferent and apathetic to the verses, "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"<sup>4</sup> (*The Waste Land*, L20-4), if he has no fore-knowledge of The Old Testament of the *Bible*. The

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<sup>4</sup> There are at least three biblical allusions in these lines of verses: 1. "And he said to me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee" (Ezekiel 2:1); 2. "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" (Ezekiel 6:6); 3. "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" (Ecclesiastes 12:5).

fore-knowledge of readers will come to help him engender a religious yearning to know the exact meaning the religious poems tend to convey. In this way, the internal psychological arousal is stirred up and ecstatic effect achieved. The following lines of verses may be applied to illustrate the point:

**Panthea:**

*Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm  
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,  
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,  
Whence the oracular vapor is hurled up  
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth.  
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,  
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain  
To deep intoxication; and uplift,  
Like Maenads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!  
The voice which is contagion to the world. (Act II: Scene III, Prometheus Unbound)*

The chasm is leading not only to the inner dwelling place of Demogorgon but also to an ecstatic world of the reader. The men are lonely because all men whose lives are so intensely inspirited are lonely, it is a reflection of the real life in a religious ideology. Their madness, their intoxication, metaphorically expresses the intensity of their endowment; the image is religious, like the madness and intoxication of the Maenads worshipping Dionysus, a god who dies and whose rebirth brings the springtime of the world. "Evoe! Evoe!" is their joyous shout, transmitting truth, virtue, love, genius, and joy (Reiter, 1967:p.121). As a reader comes to these lines of verse, he undergoes a series of psychological reactions before reaching his ecstatic state. The reader's psychological state before reading a religious poem remains an originally undisturbed one, that is, the psychological state that decides his original personality. But when he reads the religious poems, his original psychological state begins to change. Habitually, he has adapted his ideas to the daily circumstances of the actual world, where he is familiar with everything no matter whether he likes or dislikes it. When he picks up a religious poem and begins to read it, his original psychological state finds itself thrust into a strange environment, the factitious environment. It must at once begin to adapt to the new reality, since its instinctive demands may not always be immediately met. The new psychological state in the new reality of the religious poem, the reader, immature and ill prepared, is suddenly bombarded with intense and diverse sensory stimuli. Consequently, the psychological state is to be stirred up with the help of fore-knowledge of religion, which involves itself in concrete religious poetic descriptions. The process of being stirred up is also the process of internal psychological arousal. In the process of internal psychological arousal, the reader mystically changes his original psychological state into the psychological state of the characters in the religious poem. In other words, the reader may be in the psychological state of Panthea, when he reads the above mentioned lines of verse. If he does so, we say that he has entered the ecstatic state, and he can obtain a mystic experience thereby.

When the reader enters the ecstatic state, he is actually in a magic world. We relate the ecstatic state of a reader to the magic world, because magic itself has such characteristics as to be charming, tricking, and subversive, which are more or less involved in the ecstatic state. When a magician performs on the stage, all the audience is very much interested in the mystic changes in his sleeves, anxiously fixing their eyes on some point from which miracles are unexpectedly made. Nobody is clear why doves can come from the sleeves of the magician and why a huge plane disappears in the presence of a large audience in just a few minutes. This is the charming power of magic. But behind the charming power are some tricks that can disturb the audience's normal mind and make him change his reasonable judgement, getting him trapped in a ridiculous way of thinking. As a result, he subverts his thinking power and reasoning ability, taking what he saw for reality. Actually, in the process of subversion, the audience subverts not only his visual sense but also his psychological state, which begins to move from the actual world and enters the magical world, in which he feels delight. The same is true with religious-poem reading. Light and darkness are always images that mystics use in religious poetry, expressing a paradox: the darkness expresses the emptying of the mind, making it void of multiplicity so that there is only unity, pure consciousness, the light. The darkness is the light. Dionysius the Areopagite, a Christian mystic at the end of the fifth century A.D., spoke of God as "the dazzling obscurity" (Reiter, 1967:p.123). Thus, darkness, just like the light, is also the symbol of the Eternal and the Infinite, the name for God. In religious poems, there exist these kinds of examples

**Panthea:**

*I see a mighty darkness  
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom  
Dark round, as light from the meridian sun,  
Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,  
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is  
A living spirit. ( Act II: scene IV, Prometheus Unbound)*

*Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,  
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,  
Eternal King; thee, Author of all being,  
Fountain of light, thyself invisible  
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st  
Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st  
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud  
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine  
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,  
Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim  
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes. (Paradise Lost III, L372-82)*

*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 (The Waste Land, L386-95)*

When Asia and Panthea reached the end of Demogorgon's cave, the veil hiding whatever sits on the black throne fell; they were at the culmination of a mystical trance, time and matter falling away and Eternity confronted. The Eternity is a "mighty darkness, and rays of gloom dart round, as light from the meridian sun". When reading these lines, the reader may feel himself in a misty fairyland, seeing an Eternal mixture of darkness and light with supernatural power. The same is true with the Eternity in *Paradise Lost*. It is easy for readers to be aware of these lines of verse: "But when thou shad'st/ The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud/ Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine/ Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear". The clouds-surrounded God is somewhat similar to Demogorgon, an eternal shapeless mixture of darkness and light. Even in *The Waste Land*, the fragmentary lines of verse indicate the supernatural power of divine mixture of darkness and light. The time when "a cock stood on the rooftree/ Co co rico co co rico" is actually the eternal shapeless mixture of darkness and light. The crowing of the cock at this very time signals the departure of ghosts and evil spirits. Once the ghosts and evil spirits leave, the waste land starts its rebirth, and therefore the dry desolate wild land can be "in a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust/ Bringing rain." In the process of reading, the reader's mind is gradually to transfer from his habitual thinking pattern to the particular religious poetic thinking pattern in some religious poems. Once he has got himself adapted to the religious poetical thinking pattern, he tends to forget himself, that is to say, he has undergone an internal psychological arousal, experienced through the magically charming world and to enter a Chaos-like state.

## V

A Chaos-like state is a complex, disordered, unstable and changeable world, in which the Chaos-like state tends to organize itself into an order at last. Like id,<sup>5</sup> it is the ultimate sources of all psychic energy, even that which is later utilized by the other components of the personality. It is an extremely primitive structure and is unorganized, uninhibited, non-rational,

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<sup>5</sup> A term from Freud, who divides mind into three parts: id, ego and superego. For him, the id contains bodily appetites and unconscious instincts. It is not subjected to logical processing or to time, and it represents the resistance of human nature and what should be checked. The id replaced what Freud earlier called the unconscious.

and impulsive. In the Chaos-like state, a man temporarily forgets himself. He cannot identify his real ego in the past, and he find himself thrust into a strange or completely strange world, and he feels nothing familiar and everything disordered. Thus, he wants to reestablish his ego through the adjustment of his aroused psychological state, that is to say, he wants to reestablish his existence in the Chaos-like world.

The same is true with religious poetry reading. In the process of reading a religious poem, a reader may enter a Chaos-like world, where he must reestablish his ego, his existence and his internal psychological state. He must identify his ego in the new world, and only in this way could he adapt to the spirit of the religious poetical world, and find the beauty of the self-organized order in it. When the reader first pick up the poem, *The Waste Land*, he may feel Chaos rather than a complete poem, because the fragmentary lines of verses, the fragmentary meaning and the fragmentary images of the poem bring him a picture of a Chaos-like world. Conrad Aiken, in a friendly review, praised the poem but regarded it as a “brilliant and kaleidoscopic confusion” (Brooks, 1995:p.105). I think a “brilliant and kaleidoscopic confusion” must be as beautiful as the pictures of Chaos shown here. If there are any doubts, read the following lines of verse:

*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.  
Sights, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.  
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
To where Saint Mary Woonoth kept the hours  
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.  
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: “Setson!  
You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!  
That corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
Has it begin to sprout? Will it bloom this year?  
Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?  
Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,  
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!  
You! Hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable—mon frere!”* (*The Waste Land*, L60-76)

Undoubtedly, no readers can have a clear picture of these fragmentary lines of verse at once when they first read them. It is very hard for them to find a complete picture or some significant meaning immediately from these fragments, which tend to be broken into even smaller fragments in the process of reading. According to Cleanth Brooks, the result is that the fragments which appear in *The Waste Land* have by our time been broken into smaller and smaller fragments, and whereas the protagonist of *The Waste Land* knows what they were

broken off from, many of those living in the United States today see them as meaningless bits and pieces, mere detritus (Brooks, 1995:p.106). Some Americans see nothing but meaningless bits and pieces and detritus from the fragments of *The Waste Land*, because they are still in a primitive Chaos-like state of the poem and in the very psychological state they possess in their actual life. If they read the religious poem in such a normal thinking way without getting their internal psychological state adapted to the abnormal thinking way or the abnormal psychological state of the religious poetry, they would simply take *The Waste Land*, or these lines from *The Waste Land* for something like a bewildering Chaos—a patch of bewildering colorfully ill-paved mosaics. But once they temporarily forget the actual world they are in and reestablish their existence, their psychological state and their ego in the Chaos-like religious poetical world, they are to be a part of that world out of which a clear beautiful picture of what is expressed in the religious poems gradually emerges in front of them. If so, they can see even from these above-cited fragments, not mention the whole poem, the complete meaningful picture of life, death and the hope of resurrection. T. S. Eliot uses the waste land as the concrete image of a spiritual drought. His poem takes place half in the real world—the world of contemporary London, and half in a haunted wilderness—the Waste Land of the mediaeval legend; but the Waste Land is only the hero's arid soul and the intolerable world about him (Grant, 1982:p.140). From half in the real world and half in a haunted wilderness, we see a panorama of waste land caused not by war's devastation and bloodshed but by the emotional and spiritual sterility of Western man. It is the waste land of our civilization, but still remains the hope of resurrection.

Internal psychological arousal, ecstatic state, and chaos-like state, etc. are the part of the mystic experience of the reader in the process of religious poetry reading. It seems that religious poetry has a hallucinogenic effect, which drives the reader into an inner psychological arousal, an ecstatic state and even a chaos-like state. Karl Mark once said, “Religion is the opium of the people” (1978:p84). Politically speaking, he moved the flowery imaginary from the religious chain so that man could see the chain clearly and shake it off without any fantasy or consolation. But literarily speaking, fantasy is the very energetic living source, out of which many literary masterpieces are born. A Hallucinogenic effect can certainly provide the reader with a fantastic world, where he is confused and bewildered first, but soon he adjusts his psychological state by the reestablishment of his ego. He goes through a chaos-like world, an ecstatic world and at last arrives in an enlightened Infinite where he sees Eternity in a grain of sand.

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