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## YEUX GLAUQUES OF T. S. ELIOT'S POETRY: FROM THE "SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN" TO "THE FIRST-MET STRANGER IN THE WANING DUSK"

The essay deals with the so-called "symbolism of eyes" in the poetry of Thomas Stearns Eliot and starts with the explication of the syntagm - *yeux glauques* that Eliot's *il miglior fabbro* in his *Selwyn Hugh Mauberley* elevates up to the level of an exquisite poetic paradigm whose growth exceeds the boundaries of modernist deconstruction of the concept of classic beauty. Ezra Pound affirms it as a universal symbol or a poet's own "path to heaven". This kind of symbolism is, in Eliot's poetry, developed in the similar, rather complex manner which requires meticulous analysis of numerous poetic fragments starting from those published before *The Waste Land*, at the beginning of the poet's career, to those taken from the *Four Quartets* composed much later. The survey will show the author's implementation of the aforementioned symbols through the elaborate intertextual procedures with the purpose of connecting his achievements with some other poetic traditions whose beneficial influences he accumulated during a considerable period of time. Accordingly, *yeux glauques* of Eliot's poetry undergo a thorough transformation so that his primary standpoints, abounding in pessimism and gloom, are turned into the true sources of spirituality and salvation so eagerly wished by the inhabitants of his "waste land"

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An analytical approach to the poetry of English modernism, including the achievements of Thomas Stearns Eliot one of the movement's most outstanding protagonists, unavoidably leads to the discussion about its outstanding symbolist heritage. The publication of Charles Baudelaire's verses as well as the works of Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Gérard de Nerval, Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Valéry, that marked the second half of the nineteenth century, breathed a new life into English poetry due to their daring originality and bold, persistent experimentation. The symbolists decidedly rejected the poetic practice of the Parnassians as being "too representative" and the romantics as being "too public" just to concentrate on the world of the real beauty which "could be achieved ... only through art." (Sharma 1991: 12) Mallarmé grew convinced that the new poetry "should suggest and evoke and not inform,

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and that it should create the atmosphere of things rather than to name them.” (Ibid.) Mallarmé’s and other symbolists’ postulates about their poetic strategy imply that the lines they produce will abound in complexity, excessive allusiveness, blurred perspective, leading even to utter obscurity. It is known that the contemporary audience could not but consider these qualities decadent, disintegrative and essentially negative. Symbolism as a poetic trend, however, gradually prevailed which means that the abovementioned qualities definitely imposed themselves as something thoroughly new and quite revolutionary in spite of the lack of logical structure and narrative cohesion.

Symbolism, the immediate predecessor of modernism, owes its captivating appeal to the unprecedented power of synthesis of disparate elements. Jean Moréas, the author of *The Symbolist Manifesto*, claims that: “la poésie symboliste cherche à vêtir l’Idée d’une forme sensible.” (Gregorian 2009: 117). Thus Moréas promotes one of the key symbolist notions referring to: “... the organic union of form and content: form must never be empty, but always express an idea and at the same time, the idea must never appear ‘naked’ and always be hidden behind a suggestive symbolic form.” (Ibid.) In this way the poem attains the position of a separate organic entity existing in the intuited reality of its own and becoming the very symbol of it.

Symbol, as the central category of the symbolist poetry, is “applied only to a word or a set of words that signifies an object or event which itself signifies something else; that is, the words refer to something which suggests a range of reference beyond itself” (Abrams 2005: 358). Symbol is therefore created by a special use of language and imagery with the purpose to convey an appropriate meaning. This is the reason why symbol is considered very close to myth which is nothing but “...a fabulous tale that symbolically embodies profound existential truths.” (Gregorian 2009: 117). Symbol and metaphor, on the other hand, act on the same level of “figurative suggestiveness.” (Ibid.)

Critics unanimously emphasize the profound influence of French symbolism on English modernist authors. The works of T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce are quite the testimonies of the grandeur of symbolist legacy. Being the authors of highly idiosyncratic sensibilities, they, however, established various relationships with the literary trend. Ezra Pound is rightly credited for the introduction of French symbolists’ *oeuvre* to English audience but his attitude towards the leading representatives of symbolism was dubious. According to him, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé were “improper models for modern poets and could only lead to a derivative poetry.” (Hamilton 1992: 4) On the other hand, Pound was full of praise for the other set of famous symbolists, such as Théophile Gautier, Remy de Gourmont and Henri de Régnier. (47) Such diversification of symbolism is customarily attributed to Pound’s tendency to create a new literary trend that he later christened *imagism* being in many aspects similar to symbolism.

Pound’s attitude that “imagism is not symbolism” is based on his supposition that the “symbolist’s symbols had a fixed value, the imagist’s images had a variable significance.” (Stock 1970: 166) He claims that the practice of using

images as ornaments is bad and practically inefficient. According to Pound, imagists never use images in this way since "the image is itself the speech" and "the image is the word beyond formulated language." (Ibid.) This poetic creed could be exemplified by *Yeux Glauques*,<sup>2</sup> the seventh fragment of the famous *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920). This part of the poem is related to the artistic movement known as the Pre-Raphaelites, whose representatives Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his sister Christina, all of them painters and poets, preferred rather accomplished and highly emotional presentation of their motifs. However, their orientation was met with bitter criticism imparted by Robert Buchanan, the leading critic of the period, and Prime Minister William Gladstone who claimed that their way of depicting poverty was immoral. (Espey 1970: 90) Pound condemns the hypocrisy of these two eminent Victorians but, although sympathetic with the painters, he ironizes their highly aestheticized presentation of poverty.

The image that Pound uses to denounce the artists' practice of avoiding the open confrontation with social evils is the one of so-called *Yeux Glauques* (bluish-green eyes; gloomy eyes) that belonged to Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, reputedly Dante Gabriel Rossetti's lover, and the group's model. Akiko Miyake lays stress on her "poor eyes, dimmed with the materiality of water" and calls her "fallen Venus of industrialized London who is unable to find her proper adorer and substitutes a 'maquero' a sexual marauder." (1991: 41) She broadens the qualification of the girl by juxtaposing her with Dante's Beatrice whose eyes: "reflect the pure rays of heaven and the perfect form of humanity." (Ibid.) Thus the inadequacy of the girl, who, instead of being a true muse to the artists turns a prostitute, is equalled with the inadequacy of the pre-Raphaelites and their contemporary pseudo-art in comparison with the sublime artistry of Dante. The imagery of eyes is, undoubtedly, Pound's obsession and the critics agree that he develops it owing to Dante's concept of the "eyes of the beloved" and Guillaume de Lorris's poetic image of "lake - deep eyes". (30)

The implicit dismissal of the inefficient aesthetics, conveyed by the true pseudo-sentimental image proves Pound's dedication to the poetic doctrine he previously outlined in the essay "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" (1913). The piece of prose, usually considered a kind of *imagist manifesto*, starts with Pound's definition of his central poetic category:

"An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree

2 John Jenkins Espey claims that Pound's inspiration for the fragment's title came from Teophile Gauthier's poem "Caerulei Oculi" (Émaux et Camées, 1852) and the very description of whereas the description of the pre-Raphaelite muse seems to be borne out of the following lines:

"Ses yeux, où le ciel se reflète,

Mêlent à leur azur amer,

Qu'étoile une humide paillette,

Les teintes glauques de la mer" See more in *Ezra Pound's Mauberley: A Study in Composition*. p. 33.

absolutely in our application. It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art." (2019)

Eliot's indebtedness to Ezra Pound and his Imagism is copiously analyzed and confirmed many times by poet himself. It is known that Eliot, like Ezra Pound, looked for some definition of the poetic device for shaping the economical expression of author's personal sentiments in the work of art. The result of his search is to be found in the essay "Hamlet and his problems" (1921) where he defines the so-called *objective correlative*, the alleged counterpart of Pound's *image*. Eliot states that: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding 'an objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." (1975a: 48)

The essay contains the criticism of Shakespeare who, according to Eliot, failed to find the appropriate *objective correlative* to express Hamlet's spiritual turmoil:

"Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear. And the supposed identity of Hamlet with his author is genuine to this point: that Hamlet's bafflement at the absence of objective equivalent to his feelings is a prolongation of the bafflement of his creator in the face of his artistic problem." (Ibid)

Craig Raine draws attention to Eliot's prolonged readiness to deal with the *objective correlative* by analyzing the essay entitled "The Social Function of poetry" (1945). (2006: 134) One of the topics of the essay is so-called *psychological objective correlative* that Eliot discusses without explicitly naming it. Although a variant of the *objective correlative*, *psychological objective correlative* considerably diverges from it. Raine opines that as initially devised *the objective correlative*: "staged an emotion, made it manifest, so the audience could read it, in this special case the events of the play are almost a form of therapy, a reading, an interpretation, of the original inexplicable emotion." (Ibid.) Its usage is therefore, restricted to drama. The *psychological objective correlative*, however, enables artist to: "learn something about himself" (Ibid.) and to prevent his own emotions to atrophy. Eliot's argument that, among the various functions of poetry, one should think of: "the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for, which enlarges our consciousness or refines our sensibility" is singled out by Raine as "the core of his argument in the essay." (Ibid.) Accordingly "the poet's role is to find objective expression for the purely subjective" and to articulate "the inexpressible ... [which] ... makes the culture more articulate and, therefore, more sensible to subtle feeling." (Ibid)

In this very instant Eliot comes very close to Pound's attitude that the appropriate image provokes in us "that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art." (2019) Needless to say, Pound's and Eliot's musings on image and the *objective correlative* do overlap which is not to be wondered

at having in mind an enormous influence that Eliot's *il miglior fabbro* exerted not only on the author of *The Waste Land*. Pound's infatuation with the image of *eyes* is already mentioned and analyzed and as for Eliot's passion for *eyes* as his famous *objective correlative*, it is not by any means less intensive.

The imagery of the sort is to be found in Eliot's early poetry. What distinguishes the poetry of early modernists is almost an archetypal image of a man, sometimes an intellectual, being opposed to always hostile, rude and spiritually crippled society. The typical hero of the sort is Alfred J. Prufrock, the main character of the eponymous poem (*The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock*, 1915). His famous meeting with the outer world of the sort is commemorated in the well-known confessional monologue:

"And I have known the eyes already, known them all  
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,  
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?" (1963: 19)

Prufrock's attendance at a party and the confrontation with the inquisitive looks of the people surrounding him is a torment he can hardly endure. His "abject loss of control of bodily functions in the extremity of agony or terror" (Schneider 1975: 29) is inaugurated with the metaphor of a specimen – butterfly, the victim of collector's hobby.

In "Rhapsody of a Windy Night" (1916) the society is embodied by a woman whose "corner of ... eye / twists like a crooked pin" (1963: 19) which agonizes the lyrical subject. Both visions of *eyes* symbolizing the hostile glance are, in fact, presented as instruments of torture imposed on the characters by a social context *sui generis*.

The lines quoted above contain the immediate experience of the lyrical subject. On the other hand, certain feeling or knowledge of his can be mediated through the eyes of some other character whose perception is unquestionably superior. Eliot's famous poem the *The Waste Land* (1922) begins with the quotation from Petronius's *Satyricon* summarizing the episode in which Sibyl of Cumae, the prophetess, is met by a group of boys who started to pester her on account of her old age. Translated from Latin it reads: "For I once saw with my own eyes, the Cumaean Sibyl hanging in a jar, and when the boys asked her, 'Sibyl, what do you want?' she answered, 'I want to die' " (Murphy 2007: 433) The enigmatic episode from *Satyricon* is reported to the guests, feasting in the house of Petronius Arbiter, Nero's courtier, by Trimalchio, one of Petronius's friends. (Ibid.) The scene encloses one of Eliot's mightiest metaphors that many critics paid due attention to. It is generally taken that Sybil, old and decrepit, symbolizes the condition of mankind which is on the brink of death or some other disaster. The spiritual fatigue and barrenness that the contemporary world suffer from incapacitate it to do otherwise but to accept death as the only salvation. Sybil therefore sees the future and the only man who eye witnessed her ritual of prophesying is the abovementioned Trimalchio which means that the image of looming destruction is doubly mediated.

Another mythological character of *The Waste Land* endowed by a superior eyesight is Tiresias the hermaphrodite sage and the prophet. Elizabeth Wintersteen Schneider quotes one of Eliot's notes to the poem in which he claims that Tiresias "is the most important personage of the poem uniting all the rest" and that what he sees "is the substance of the poem". (1975: 80) The appearance of Tiresias in "The Fire Sermon" (*The Waste Land*) is, however, coloured with the typical modernist irony. Instead of some glorious episode of the past, Tiresias "old man with wrinkled dugs / perceived the scene" narrates of a callous seduction of an anonymous typist. The scene is concluded in an augmented ironic overtone since the prophet claims that he: "Tiresias have foresuffered all / Enacted on this same divan or bed." (Ibid.) Noticeably, the perception verb "foresee" from the first line is replaced with "foresuffer" which doubles the strength of the irony.

The basic symbolism of eyes in Eliot's early poetry and *The Waste Land* ("The Fire Sermon") as well refers to physical or mental strength, and the unobstructed use of them represents man's power to control his own life. The inhabitants of *The Waste Land*, on the other hand, are enchained by their gruesome everyday routine and stroll: "...each man fixed his eyes before his feet. / Flowed up the hill and down King William Street."<sup>3</sup> (1963: 55) The famous hyacinth garden scene in the "The Burial of the Death" (*The Waste Land*), the girl epitomizing the poet himself who, betrayed by his own poetic inspiration, exclaims: "I could not / Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither / Living nor dead". (54)

The inability to see clearly, symbolizing the spiritual deprivation of any kind, is to be found in many other poems. In "Preludes" (1911) one encounters some modern humans with "the eyes / assured of certain certainties" (14) - unable to observe anything new, whereas in the "Rhapsody of a Windy Night" the poet reports about: "...eyes in the street / Trying to peer through lighted shutters" (17) that cannot possibly penetrate and observe what happens behind.

The absence of eyesight is one of the deadliest symbols of Eliot's dismal world since eyes do not signify only physical strength, intellectuality and spirituality but are the signs and omens of life itself. In "Whispers of Immortality" (1919), Eliot establishes the direct connection with John Webster and the heritage of English metaphysical poets abounding in macabre images. He claims that "Webster was much possessed by death / And saw the skull beneath the skin," (45), together with:

"...breastless creatures under ground  
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.  
I

3 Eliot remarks that these lines echo Dante's *Inferno*, III, 55-57:

'si lunga tratta

di gente, Ch'io non avrei mai creduto

che morte tanta n' avesse disfatta.' See *Notes on The Waste Land*. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909 - 1962*, p. 71

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls  
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!" (Ibid.)

Eliot's convincing visualization of horror based on the horrible view of thousands of eyeless corpses is surely a prophetic one having in mind the events in the First and the Second World War. On the other hand, the fact that the dead seem to be, in the course of time, reunited with nature ("daffodil bulbs")<sup>4</sup> introduces some peaceful tone which mortifies the terrible impact of the scene of mass death.

These rather frequent, hideous scenes of death and decomposition symbolized by the absence of eyes are sometimes replaced by some almost idyllic images in which death figures as an irresistible force that peacefully transforms human beings or even as someone who decorates the skeletons of the deceased. The episode in "The Burial of the Dead" (*The Waste Land*) introduces one of Eliot's famous ironic characters, Madame Sosostriis, who in the course of fortune telling offers the card with: "the drowned Phoenician sailor / Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!" (54) The unreal scene of Phlebas the Phoenician, who, with his eyes miraculously transformed, rests in peace at the bottom of the sea is repeated in "The Death by Water", the fourth section of the poem. Martin Scofield identifies this poetic phrase as an intertextual reference to Shakespeare's "*The Tempest* quoted or half-changed" ("Those are pearls that were his eyes', 'Musing upon the king my brother's wreck') that "adds an enigmatic connotation of death by drowning and of possible transfiguration." (1997: 131) The identical poetic image is presented in "A Game of Chess", the second section of *The Waste Land*, where the man who attends a mysterious lady hums a very popular tune of those days called Shakespearian Rag while growing obsessed by some morbid thoughts of death. His gloomy musings culminate with "I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes." (1963: 57)

On the other hand, the "functional" eyes, symbolizing the undiminished ability of perception, may be the source of mental pain, sometimes greater than their absence. In "A Game of Chess", the second chapter of *The Waste Land*, Eliot stages a dialogue of seemingly quite a mismatched couple since a woman pours numerous, frantic questions on a man whose answers are orchestrated in the form of an internal monologue. On reaching the hysterical paroxysm, the woman asks: "What shall we ever do?" (58) to which the man imparts his first loud answer that ends with: "And we shall play a game of chess, / Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door." (Ibid.) The couple participating scene makes no exception since, like most of the characters in *The Waste Land*, they are agonized by the realization of absence of all prospects for the future. Obviously the torment of the silent man is no less acute than the woman's since he is forced to face the reality he yearns to shut his "lidless" eyes to.

Peter James Lowe finds a parable of this very situation claiming that Eliot's use of "lidless eyes" echoes Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. He describes

4 Martin Scofield claims that 'Daffodil bulbs instead of balls / Stared from the sockets of eyes' recalls Webster's own 'A dead man's skull beneath the roots of flowers' (*The White Devil*, V.iv.137) See more in T. S. Eliot, *The Poems*. p. 96-97.

how “before tormenting the Titan the second fury asks him, ‘Dost imagine / We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?’” (2002: 43) Lowe opines that in both situations: “A sense of painful personality persists.” (Ibid.)

The most frequent use of the symbol in one single poem is encountered upon in “Eyes that last I saw in tears” (1924), one of Eliot’s minor poems composed in the first half of the twenties.<sup>5</sup> The topic of the poem is almost romantic (although Eliot abhorred Romanticism) and deals with a mysterious parting of two lovers whose identity is unknown. The feeling of loss and sorrow is confided by one of them (presumably male) who mentions that the eyes that saddened him so much are seen: “Through division / Here in death’s dream kingdom” (1963: 133) The next time he sees them they are without tears and “this is his affliction” (Ibid.) The “affliction” that troubles him most is the bleak prospect of not seeing the eyes again because they are the: “Eyes of decision / Eyes [he] shall not see unless / At the door of death’s other kingdom.” (Ibid.) The climax of the sorrow springs out of the fact that at this place the eyes “outlast a little while / A little while outlast the tears / And hold us in derision.” (Ibid.) As one can see the eyes (word – symbol), so successively repeated introduces the incantatory tone in the poem and this is, therefore, quite appropriate poetic device for the expression of tragic privation of the lyrical subject.

The poem, on the other hand, is open to various readings. Dominic Manganiello puts forward the opinion of Ronald Bush who states that it is impossible to determine: “... whether the eyes and the tears are the speaker’s or the beloved’s.” (1989: 63-64) Besides, he seems ready to connect Eliot’s poem with the two scenes in the *Divine Comedy* that include the tears of heroes. The first scene refers to: “Dante’s contrition in *Purgatorio XXXI* for his betrayal of Beatrice” (64) when, he, being sinful, cannot look straight into her eyes. The second scene, according to Manganiello, depicts: “Their meeting in Eden [which] is in fact foreshadowed in *Inferno II*, where both Dante and Beatrice are in tears.” (Ibid.) Urged by Lucy, Beatrice “responds by turning ‘her bright eyes weeping’ (gli occhi lucenti lagrimando; II6) to Virgil, and urges him to rescue Dante, who finds himself stranded on the desert slope.” (Ibid.) Manganiello’s in-depth analysis of Dante’s poetry and the meticulous search for its echoes in Eliot’s *oeuvre* ends, consequently, in an even wider discussion on the scope of Pound’s influence on Eliot.

Martin Scofield notices that Eliot, together with the eye symbolism, tackles, for the first time, the imagery of “death’s dream kingdom” and “death’s other kingdom” where dream is seen consciously as a separate realm or ‘kingdom’. (1997: 138)<sup>6</sup> The intertwining of these two imageries according to

5 “Eyes that last I saw in tears” was published in for the first time in 1924 together with “The wind sprang up at four o’clock” and “This is the dead land”. They were collected under the title “Doris’s Dream Songs”. All three of them are fragmentarily included in into well-known *The Hollow Men*.

6 The symbolism of the three kingdoms is developed in both “The Eyes that I Last Saw in Tears” and *The Hollow Men* as “death’s other Kingdom” (literal fact of death), “death’s dream Kingdom” (death in life) and “the twilight Kingdom” (death that precedes awakening and revelation). These are Kingdoms are taken as the three stages of the journey of Soul



Scofield, marks Eliot's introduction of: "... a new kind of reflection on experience - rather than just a dramatic presentation of it - which becomes increasingly marked in the poems from *The Hollow Men* onwards." (Ibid.) *The Hollow Men* (1925) is known as the captivating metaphor of the futility of human existence. The epigraph of the poem is a statement ("Mistah Kurtz - He Dead") (1963: 77) taken from the Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It alludes to the *timor mortis* of the central character who, shortly before death, summarizes his life experience in one single phrase - "the horror, the horror." (Murphy 2007: 435) The words from the epigraph, spoken in incorrect English by a black servant, reveal that Kurtz's pre-mortem self-introspection and belated recognition of the essence of life will not be shared by anyone. Sudden death, that probably comes as a relief to Kurtz, catches him literally with the eyes wide open thus preventing us from knowing the full scope of his "horror".

Certain lines from the first chapter of the poem can be taken as the direct reference to Kurtz's condition. The poet mentions the individuals who perished suddenly, without confession, accepting their horrors to the fullest:

"Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us-if at all-not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men." (1963: 79)

One must not miss the ironic undertone in the Eliot's lines because modern men, our fellow-sufferers who die or, in his words, cross "with direct eyes, to Death's other Kingdom" are not even "violent souls" like Kurtz but only "stuffed men" devoid of any substance as intimated in the sub-epigraph of the poem that reads "A penny for the old Guy."<sup>7</sup>

The symbol of eyes reappears in the second chapter of the poem but this time related to the immediate experience of the poet who avoids meeting the eyes of some mysterious stranger:

"Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear:

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to Heaven or to the acquisition of supreme knowledge. It is known that the visionary journey through the three kingdoms beyond death, depicted in the *Divine Comedy* (c. 1315) inspired Eliot to create one of his ingenious adaptations. See more in Martin Scofield, *T. S. Eliot, The Poems*, pp. 144- 145.

7 Russell Eliot Murphy explains that the sub-epigraph is in fact the reference to the festivity commemorating the anniversary of so-called The Gunpowder Plot when the effigy of Guy Fawkes the supreme conspirator, stuffed with straw, is carried along the streets. (254) He adds that: "Fawkes, both in life and most definitely in death as a papier-mâché effigy, is another candidate for being, like Kurtz, a "hollow man"—someone whose core humanity was a superficial sham and who was directed just as powerfully by the abstract coldness of a cause, misguided or not, rather than by a primal sympathy for the simple welfare of other mortal creatures like himself." See more in *Critical Companion to T. S. Eliot, A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, pp. 253-254.

There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column” (1963: 80)

According to Dominic Manganiello Eliot derives the vision of a poet shunning a gaze directly from Dante’s *The Divine Comedy, Purgatorio XXX* and XXI. (1989: 61) Eliot’s lines “recall Dante’s use of the familiar lyric trope of eyes to signify the windows of the soul.” (Ibid.) Dante therefore is, both eager and afraid “to behold Beatrice’s eyes in the garden of Eden because they reflect the human and divine natures of Christ.” (Ibid.) Eliot’s lyrical subject, being sinful, considers himself unworthy of such an experience.

The symbol can be located for the third time in the fourth chapter of the poem where the despairing poet states that: “The eyes are not here, / There are no eyes here / In this valley of dying stars.” (1963: 81) Accordingly, the *conditio humana* of the “hollow men” is hopeless since they are:

“gathered on this beach of the tumid river  
Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose”  
Of death’s Twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.” (Ibid.)

The salvation, as a rule, rarely hinted at in Eliot’s poetry, is announced but through the symbol of eyes which, according to Nidhi Tiwari: “reappear in their vision as ‘the perpetual star’ of ‘death’s twilight kingdom’”. (2001: 134) Upon insisting that the “multifoliate” rose is the spiritual white rose, symbol of Virgin Mary, he concludes that: “the eyes’ and the ‘rose’ are archetypal symbols of divinity which leads to rebirth and salvation.” (Ibid.) Dominic Manganiello’s reading of the lines centers upon the fact that: “For the first time the hollow men realise that their vision, like Dante’s, can only be restored when the beloved’s eyes ‘reappear / As the perpetual star’ (the Blessed Virgin Mary or ‘living star’; *Par.* XXIII. 92-3)”. (1989: 65-66) Obviously the eyes here figure as one of the very rare religious symbols void of irony in the poem which ends with the lines oftentimes labelled as blasphemous. (Brooker 2018: 94). Eliot is known to have been in the spiritual crisis of a kind so the religious skepticism is something that exists in many poems he composed before 1927 when he converted to Anglo-Catholicism. The next poem of his (*Ash Wednesday*, 1930) reflects Eliot’s deep commitment to religion and contains the whole gamut of intricate religious symbols.

The poet’s religiosity comes to its fullest in *Four Quartets* (1941) which is undoubtedly the greatest work of modern religious poetry. Here the symbolism of eyes is not as prominent as in *The Hollow Men* but still plays the significant part in the structure of the poem. “Little Gidding”, the fourth part of the *Quartets* is, according to Jewel Spears Brooker, the culmination “Eliot’s exploration of theodicy” performed in the context of “war involving massive

suffering and genocide." (172) The memorable scene in "Little Gidding" is the one depicting the sudden meeting of the poet (lyrical subject) with a stranger. Brooker believes that the scene is rooted in reality since it refers to one of Eliot's regular night patrols through the "smouldering streets" (173) of bombed London where he used to work as a fire-watcher during the Second World War. The poet reports how:

"...in the waning dusk [he]  
caught the sudden look of some dead master  
Whom [he] had known, forgotten, half recalled  
Both one and many, in the brown baked features  
The eyes of a familiar compound ghost  
Both intimate and unidentifiable ..." (1963: 203)

Brooker perceives Eliot's "the familiar compound ghost" as dialectical (known / forgot / half - recalled)" and claims that, on one level, it represents "the narrator's divided self on another, the victims of the bombing raids; and on still another, his "dead masters." (2018: 174) Dominic Manganiello reveals that the scene, like many others we analyzed, radiates a Dantescan aura since it is based on Dante's meeting his friend and poet Brunetto Latini in the *Divine Comedy* ("Inferno", XV). (1989: 154) Upon indicating that London in those days was a true counterpart to Dante's "Inferno", he acknowledges that even the master's appearances ("brown baked features") is Eliot's adaptation of Dante's lines. (Ibid.)

It is known that at the end of the encounter the dead master endows the poet with the three "gifts" in form of demands with the purpose of perfecting his art. The first one is the mortification of senses that obscure thoughts but without any enchantment with such a condition. The second one refers to the awareness of the irrelevancy of rage and laughter because their objects lose importance and the third one is the most painful since it requires the evocation of evil and foolish deeds committed in the past. (1963: 204-205) The fulfillment of these demands leads to the attainment of superior poetic skill and to the understanding of the essence of life. That is why the encounter with "familiar compound ghost" seems so definite, even fatal.

The meetings of Eliot and some "dead masters", both those that he referred to in his poetry and the ones of which he did not leave any testimony, undoubtedly marked his life. The list of authors "compound ghosts" Eliot communicated with, is, by all means, very long since it ranges from Dante, Latini, Guido Cavalcanti up to Jonathan Swift, John Milton, and others. This is how Eliot actualizes one of his poetic creeds telling us that: "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" and that "His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." (1975b: 38) Therefore "the eyes of a familiar compound ghost" the poet crosses "in the waning dusk" are but a kind a meeting point between different, seemingly irreconcilable artistic doctrines that fuse together owing to the syncretism of Eliot's poetic genius.

The eye symbolism in the remaining works of T. S. Eliot is less frequent but still rather powerful which confirms the widespread opinion that every single scene, symbol or image in the whole body Eliot's work is meticulously devised and carefully placed. The analysis understandably did not cover all the variations of the relevant imagery that became the memorable *loci* in spite of their complexity that provoked confusion even among the most accomplished readers. Such misunderstandings were quite frequent in the early stage of his career when he felt invited to facilitate the access to his *aporias* as was the case when he added his famous *Notes* to *The Waste Land*. It is however known that Eliot, apart from some other very rare occasions, never set boundaries to the free flow of associations of his readers. Such a standpoint is something one could expect from the very day Eliot, as a student, laid his hands on Arthur Symons's book *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. Having drawn upon the heritage of French symbolism, both Pound and Eliot laid foundations of their own branch of symbolism. The *image* and the *objective correlative* definitely broaden the perspective of readers ready to cope with oblique shapes and deceptive vistas of Eliot's and Pound's lines. The analysis of development of eye symbolism in Eliot's poetry is carried out chronologically starting with his early poems such as *The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock*, some minor poems composed in the 1920s, over *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men*, *Ash Wednesday* and finally to the *Four Quartets*. The aforementioned symbolism is varied in form of numerous sets of contrarities such as torture and salvation, life and death, abundance and deprivation, hope and despair, nihilism and religiosity although not arranged in such an order. Eliot's poetry, being the fundamental epitome of modernism, evades regularity, symmetry, predictability and finality which is quite the stimulus for further readings. The variety of the quoted judgments and interpretations of Eliot's verses, some of them quite innovative and ingenious, prove that the richness and profundity of Eliot's symbolism still presents a challenge. Eliot would undoubtedly encourage any attempt to embark on a new hermeneutic adventure of the kind since:

“For most of us, this is the aim  
 Never here to be realised;  
 Who are only undefeated  
 Because we have gone on trying;  
 We, content at the last  
 If our temporal reversion nourish  
 (Not too far from the yew-tree)  
 The life of significant soil.” (1963:199)  
 “The Dry Salvages”, *Four Quartets*

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## YEUX GLAUQUES ЕЛИОТОВЕ ПОЕЗИЈЕ ОД „ЗРАКА СУНЦА НА ПОЛОМЉЕНОМ СТУБУ” ДО „ПРВОГ СУСРЕТА СА СТРАНЦЕМ У НЕСТАЈУЋЕМ СУМРАКУ”

Резиме

Рад обрађује такозвану „симболику очију” у поезији Томаса Стернса Елиота, а почиње разјашњењем синтагме *Yeux Glauques* коју Елиотов *il miglior fabbro* Езра Паунд у својој поеми *Хју Селвин Моберли* уздиже до нивоа праве правцате поетске парадигме која се не развија само у смислу модернистичке деконструкције појма класичне лепоте. За Паунда је она нека врста универзалног симбола односно „песниковог пута у небо”. Та симболика је на сличан начин актуелизована и у Елиотовом песништву на сличан иначе веома сложен начин, тако да ће се у раду анализирати читав низ песничких фрагмената, почев од оних који су објављени пре поеме *Пуста земља*, с почетка Елиотовог стваралаштва, све до *Четири квартиџа*, који припадају ауторовом познијем периоду. Анализа ће показати како је поменута симболика имплементирана у циљу повезивања ауторовог песничког фундуса, путем фасцинантних интертекстуалних искорака, са другим песничким традицијама које је својим надасве интегративним стваралачким приступом баштинио. У том смислу *Yeux Glauques* Елиотовог песништва бивају трансформисане тако да оно што се на почетку његовог пута могло сматрати скоро неприметним духовним пропламсајима, постепено постаје светло духовног преображаја и спаса које иначе недостаје суморном обзорју његове „пусте земље”.

*Кључне речи:* Елиот, Паунд, модернизам, симболизам, очи, објективни корелатив, Данте, слика, интертекстуалност

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