CHAPTER 9

“UNREAL CITY”: THE IMAGE OF THE CITY IN T. S. ELIOT’S POETRY

“DÜŞSEL ŞEHİR”: T. S. ELIOT ŞİİRİNDE ŞEHİR İMGESİ

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ABSTRACT

As a modernist poet writing in London during World War I and in the postwar period, Eliot takes the City of London as the background of his poems and presents a bleak image of the city through his lines. In “The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and in “The waste land” the reader follows the poet personae through the streets of London by experiencing each element that defines London as Eliot gives life to the city by personifying its elements such as the London fog. The image of the city in Modernist literature is always a pessimistic one and this is not only the result of the Great War and its aftermath but also an image that is borrowed from late nineteenth-century concerns in literature such as industrialization, migration to the big city, crowded and suffocating city life, and so on. However, modernist literature also depicts a conflicting relationship between the metropolis and the modern individual in which one closely identifies with the city but feels alienated in it at the same time. This paper aims to discuss that the city has its own life and character created by the language used to describe the city by Eliot, and endeavours to scrutinize the conflicting nature of the individual’s relation to the big city, which s/he both antagonizes and identifies with in Eliot’s poetry.

Keywords: City, London, T. S. Eliot, British poetry, modernism and the city

ÖZ

T. S. Eliot, Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve savaş sonrası dönemde Londra’da yazmakta olan Modernist bir şair olarak Londra şehrini şiirlerinin arka planı olarak kullanır ve dizelerinde şehrin kasvetli bir imgesini sunar. “J. Alfred Prufrock’un Aşk Şarkısı” ve Çorak Ülke eserlerinde okur, şair kişisini Londra sokaklarında takip ederken Eliot’ın Londra sisi gibi kişileştirdiği ve şehri tanımlayan her bir ögesini de deneyimler. Modernist edebiyatta şehir imgesi her zaman karamsar bir imgedir ve bu sadece Büyük Savaş’ın ve

neticelerinin sonucu değildir, aynı zamanda bu imge ondokuzuncu yüzyıl sonu edebiyatında yer bulan endüstrileşme, büyükşehre göç, kalabalık ve boğucu şehir yaşamı gibi kaygılardan da ödünç alınan bir imgedir. Ancak Modernist edebiyat, metropol ve modern birey arasında, kişinin hem özdeşleştiği hem de aynı zamanda dışlanmış ve kopuk hissettiği, ikircikli bir ilişkiyi de tasvir eder. Bu makale, şehrin, Eliot’ın onu betimlemek için kullandığı dil ile yarattığı, kendine ait bir hayatı ve karakteri olduğu fikrini tartışmayı amaçlar ve Eliot şiirinde bireyin, hem özdeşleştiği hem de düşman olarak gördüğü, büyükşehir ile ilişkisinin doğasını irdelemeye çalışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şehir, Londra, T. S. Eliot, Britanya şiiri, modernizm ve şehir

1. Introduction

As a modernist and Anglo-American poet writing in London during the First World War and in the postwar period, T. S. Eliot projects a bleak image of the city at the turn of the century in his poems “The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and in “The waste land.” However, he also depicts a conflicting relationship between the metropolis and the modern individual in which one is in close accordance with the city life but feels suffocated in it at the same time. London, in Eliot’s specified poems, has its own life and character created by Eliot’s impressionistic and symbolic use of the sounds and other elements specific to the City of London. Thus, the city’s personality and the individual’s relationship with it both take a new turn in modernist literature.

2. Literature and the City & London

If literature is a crucial element of human civilization, another indicative of civilization, the city, is an undeniable part of literature as well. It can be suggested that both have evolved or have been cultivated by human beings side by side. Therefore, the image of the city in literature, and literary cities are concepts as old as literature itself, as human life is tightly connected with geography, habitat, and storytelling. In “Introduction: Peripherality and literary urban studies” Ameel et al. (2015) suggest that

[F]rom the very earliest surviving literary texts, city images appear in all their contradictory complexity: as nodes of creative and destructive energy; as beacons of utopian possibility and of moral warning. In their literary emanations, cities tend to be understood through the notions of centrality and density, in implicit contrast to a (suburban, rural, colonial) hinterland or periphery. (p. 1)

From the earliest cities to the earliest conflicts between human civilization and nature, the development of the cities, the change in the perception of the city and civilization, the expectations from or the disappointments caused by the cities are also reflected in the literature. A reflection, not only of the city or civilization, but also of humanity can be suggested and that the depictions of or interpretations about cities are also expositions about the state of humanity.

In *Writing the city: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*, Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley (1994) quote Saul Bellow as follows: “Saul Bellow calls the city ‘the expression of the human experience it embodies, and this includes all personal history.’ This is to see the city from a viewpoint different from that of classic geographical descriptions” (p. 1). Therefore, starting with the earliest epic, *The epic of Gilgamesh* and its central city,

Uruk the metropolis, readers of literature or sacred texts not only read about imaginary or real geographical places but also about anything that creates the city and earns it its very own characteristics. It is also important to mention that great cities (capitals, metropolises such as Athens, Rome, Paris, London, Istanbul, and so on) are pictured and projected in literature as unique existences with their own particular characteristics that turn them into cities with "personalities."

For Arthur Symons, an early modernist, "[...] the visible world exists, very actively; and, for [him], cities are like people, with souls and temperaments of their own [...]" (Matthews, 2004, p. 37). Another early modernist, Ford Maddox Ford, as Steven Matthews (2004) interprets in his book *Modernism*, "shares Symon's view that the city is in itself a 'Personality' whose character he is anxious to capture in his text, as opposed to presenting asset of economic, political and social conditions and facts" (p. 37).

Throughout the history of literature, it can be seen that certain cities have always been depicted with certain characteristics and these depictions also reveal so much about the historical and social background of the work's period and the human condition at the time. Central cities, such as capitals and metropolises are seen as centres of active social and intellectual life, arts, trade and economy, yet also as centres of all evil and danger as can be seen from the representation of London in British literature since the Medieval times. The history of the representation of London in significant works of literature dates back to Medieval literature. Craig E. Bertolet (2008) discusses the domination of London in Medieval literature in *The rise of London literature: Chaucer, Gower, Longland and the poetics of the city in late medieval poetry* and John Twynning (1998) discusses the image of London in Early Modern literature in his *London dispossessed: Literature and social space in early modern city*; all of which prove how London has always been a literary city through the ages, as well as an academic subject.

Any adjective used to describe the city and its elements can be taken as direct comments about the fabric of the society, the physical and psychological situation of its inhabitants, and even politics. Preston and Simpson-Housley (1994) offer a reading of the literary city as an entity that reflects the human psyche:

The city's air, too, may be blent, composed of the hopes, aspirations, disappointments and pain of those who live in it; like Larkin's church, it is a kind of vessel, filled with human experience. The city is an aggregation or accumulation, not just in demographic, economic or planning terms, but also in terms of feeling and emotion. Cities thus become more than their built environment, more than a set of class or economic relationships; they are also an experience to be lived, suffered, undergone. (pp. 1-2)

As mentioned in the quotation above, London is also full of human experience and inevitably defined by the experience of its inhabitants, and it also defines them in turn. Any writer who employs oneself in writing about London, be it a Londoner or an outsider, creates/ projects or follows a similar version of the city, their characters, narrators are at once both amazed and terrified by this great city.

However, these conflicting ideas take a different turn starting with the Industrial Revolution, and Romanticism, as the rural areas and London had gradually metamorphosed into a spectacle of industrialism. Modernist literature was also very much affected by this Romantic view of the city as a dark and crowded place that diminishes the human soul:

As industrialization developed in Europe, what might be called the pastoral debate—city vs. country, culture vs. nature, mechanical vs. organic—took on a greater urgency as the city came to be regarded as the most obvious symbol of a new and pressing reality. But the ways in which that symbol may be employed and its potency in imaginative terms vary enormously. Wordsworth, for instance, in Book VII of *The Prelude*, finds in London some of the delights of variety and energy, but ultimately finds no difficulty in rejecting its *mélange* of sights, sounds and inhabitants. His images for London are sometimes of confusion; [...] Equally significant, however, is the sense of falsity of so much that he sees in London [...] Wordsworth concedes the allure of such sights and the other entertainments, from theater to law courts, that London offered him. (Preston & Simpson-Housley, 1994, pp. 3-4)

This early Romantic perspective of confusion or conflict is existent in Eliot's modernist poetry as well; however, the desire or the ability to turn to Nature in Romanticism is no longer available for the Modernist poet, as can also be seen in "The waste land," not only because of massive industrialization but also because of the effects and the aftermath of the Great War.

3. T. S. Eliot, Modernism and London

Moving from the Romantic escapism to Modernist poetry, it can be said that modernist poets, Eliot in particular, are not seeking escapism anymore, the dark and suffocating city is the same, yet it withholds the prospect of inspiration and diverse possibilities as the center of intellectual life. Eliot, "unlike Wordsworth's disgust with the aural and visual pollution produced by the London populace" (Harding, 2003, p. 26) uses all the audial and visual elements of the city to create his unique poetry. In that sense, one might suggest that Eliot's London in "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and in "The waste land" also has connections with the depiction of London in the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. An image of London one can read in Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, or even in Bram Stoker (Matthews, 2004, p. 35). Preston and Simpson-Housley (1994) also draw attention to

the difference between Wordsworth and Dickens; it can also be seen as a difference between Wordsworth and Eliot, maybe not in terms of ideas but in terms of their source of inspiration and use of technique:

For a writer like Dickens, however, the city may be a location both threatening and alluring, menacing and exciting. The very aggregation of experience that finally appals Wordsworth, offers to Dickens rich material, and his characters' experience of the city may be a mixed one. Nicholas Nickleby's first sight of London, for instance, offers a vision of chaos [...]. (p. 4)

Eliot, similarly, finds "rich material" in London, first as an outsider who moved to London in 1914 when the war broke out, then as a poet who "seems especially concerned with the perils of cosmopolitanism" (Witemeyer, 2003, p. 12).

As a poet, who is considered as a "high modernist" (Kavaloski 2014), he breaks away from previous forms and techniques. Yet he, maybe with a nostalgic and elitist attitude that coincides with the definition of modernism, and sometimes by using the "old masters" with techniques such as montage and pastiche, creates unique poetical works. Although he introduces lines from different poets and authors, and older texts, he is able to show them in a completely new light and in a way to create a contemporary version, his or his poet persona's version, of the city.

Modernism gives birth to other modernist movements such as expressionism, and expressionism, which focuses on the individual therefore on the subject, becomes the movement that dominates the subjective approach in literature and poetry. Expressionism, as the *Routledge encyclopedia of modernism* defines, is

[o]ne of the foremost modernist movements to emerge in Europe in the early years of the twentieth-century. It had a profound effect on the visual arts, as well as on music, dance, drama, literature, poetry, and cinema. Rather than depict physical reality, Expressionism developed as a reaction against the prevailing interest in positivism, naturalism, and Impressionism, as artists who were heavily influenced by the work of Edvard Munch and Vincent Van Gogh sought to explore subjective content, finding the visual means to fully evoke or express an emotion, mood, or idea through their artwork. (Poppelreuter et al., 2016, para. 1)

As expressionism is also dominant in the poetry of the early twentieth century, what the reader sees and experiences reading modernist poetry, and especially Eliot's poetry, is an expressive recreation of the city that combines different elements, sensory perceptions, emotions and interpretations of an individual.

“The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” which was written in 1917, begins with an epigraph in Italian taken from Dante Alighieri’s *Divine comedy*’s “Inferno,” Canto 27 where Dante’s poet persona hears Count Guido da Montefeltro’s answer about telling this visitor his story. As this epigraph is also the first lines of the poem, it can be said that our poet or poet persona identifies himself with Count Guido da Montefeltro who is in Hell, and London is no different from the 8th circle of Hell, the “evil ditches” where evil counsellors, hypocrites, thieves, and so on, are punished (Dante, 2003). The very first lines of Eliot himself, “Let us go then, you and I” takes the reader on an imaginary or real journey through the streets of “modern” hell, London. This description of the city can be interpreted in different ways, it can be read as a very individualistic experience of the poet persona or as the situation of the modern city and modern individual’s situation in early twentieth-century London which was marked by the aftermath of Industrialization and the effects of the Great War. According to Jay Martin,

Eliot subsumed city life into poetry by concentrating upon its nightmarish, but also its marvelous, qualities; he saw it both as an illusion, deeply deceptive, and as a mirage, enticing and appalling. It provides phantoms of horror together with phantoms of delight; the prospects of the decay of man and the possibilities for his renewal. In short, the city----- which the socialist Frank Parsons called ‘the aggregation of all that is best in civilization and all that is worst in the remnants of barbarism. (quoted in Farzana, 2015, p. 83)

Living in a period that brought together primitivity, barbarism and high intellectuality, Eliot not only saw the fall of civilization but also was able to successfully reimagine and recreate London and its modern atmosphere by giving it a depressive, oppressive yet still enticing character: the evenings in London are “like a patient etherized upon a table” suggesting the drowsiness and heaviness of not only the city but the very same effect it creates in the inhabitants of it.

Lines that talk about “[H]alf deserted streets,” “muttering retreats,” “restless nights in one-night cheap hotels/And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:/Streets that follow like a tedious argument/Of insidious intent/To lead you to an overwhelming question [...]” (Eliot, 2004a, p. 13) not only show that London has layers and layers of different faces, a diversity, cities in cities, but they also create a visual and audial image of the city that gives London a voice and character of its own. The personality of London is created through its streets and dark alleys, its daily life and everyday noises. Most of the time these are given as negative attributions, as can be seen from the adjectives like “insidious,” “tedious,” “overwhelming,” and the same effect is supported by the visual dominance of the “yellow fog” and the “yellow smoke” that “rubs its muzzle on the window-panes” (Eliot, 2004a, p. 14). The fog is a trademark of London, however the smoke brings into mind the industrial city; a city that

is covered with smoke that shines with the yellow light of street lamps. The stress on the colour yellow also evokes the idea of sickness and death as Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1996) explain in *The penguin dictionary of symbols*, "[I]t [...] heralds decrepitude, old age and the approach of death, and ultimately yellow becomes a substitute for black" (p. 1138). These interpretations all add up to the negative atmosphere in the city but as Eliot personifies these elements of the city by using cat imagery and muttering voices, he achieves to add a softness to these traits that still recalls drowsiness.

The poem is also about the situation of our poet persona, a modern individual, and his experience in and with the modern city and life in the city. It can be seen through these lines to what extent the poet persona feels insecure and alienated in the city. Steven Matthews (2004) comments upon "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock" as follows:

A similar vision of the ubiquity of the derelict and the potentially monstrous in the indifferent and anonymous city streets haunts the cityscapes in early poems by T. S. Eliot. The cat-like yellow fog and intermingled smoke that rubs along the streets of "the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) mirrors the emotional and intellectual obfuscation of the poem's central persona. (pp. 39-40)

As Matthews suggests, London is indifferent to the intellectual or physical suffering of the individual; the individual feels alienated yet as London is still one of the capitals of intellectual life, and maybe the only one away from the warfare, the intellectual poet persona as we have in "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock" also feels too attached to the city. Although the women, who "come and go/Talking of Michelangelo," are not necessarily the intellectual circle of London, the mentioning of Michelangelo, a Renaissance artist, comes as a sound that reminds our poet persona of his interaction with or existence in the daily life of this modern city.

All throughout the poem, as mentioned before, the reader cannot be sure if our poet persona is really walking through the streets like a flâneur or if it is just an imaginary inner journey that finally takes him to a place that he feels safer. However, in either way, this journey introduces the reader to the poet persona's London with its sounds, faces, and emotions the way they are reflected in the poet persona's expressions about the judging eyes that he is afraid of or his life that he measures with coffee spoons. Among all these, the poet persona tries to escape the oppressive existence of the city with all its sounds and images by daydreaming about the singing mermaids; even in his daydream he feels insecure, yet he is completely drawn into the songs of the mermaids like an Odysseus figure. Robert B. Kaplan suggests that

Prufrock lives in a world of fantasy and daydreams of which the monologue itself is a symptom. In this unreal world, he has allowed his ideal conceptions (of women, for example, as indicated by the sea-girls) overshadow his real life. Thus he has neither rejected nor accepted love. Rather he has created a false notion of it which has prevented him from taking any kind of action. So he cannot abandon the illusions of his fantasy world, and he cannot accept the realities of the other world in which the women talk, quite probably foolishly, of Michaelangelo. (quoted in Farzana, 2015, pp. 84-85)

However, this attempt at escaping the modern city's depressive claws fails as "human voices," women who talk of Michelangelo, wake him and drown him. Thus, although the poet persona is antagonistic to the city, he cannot escape it; as a modern man, he is also a part of this modern city.

It can be seen that by using all these sensory elements, Eliot does not only reflect his version of the city, but he also creates a unique personality for London. Therefore, all these elements also become the language of the city, its unique way to communicate with the poet persona who cannot turn a deaf ear to its calling. However, this communication also turns out to be a miscommunication, which is again a very dominant concept in modernist literature.

The very same language of the city, that consists of sensory elements, conflicting images, confusion and that leads to miscommunication, is more dominant in Eliot's "The waste land" which was written in 1922, after the Great War. The depression that follows the Great War adds up to the depressive tone of the poem and therefore affects the atmosphere of the city. The poem consists of five parts and multiple speakers; it is nearly impossible to pinpoint the exact number of poet personae or their identities. The tone continually changes from a casual dialogue to a Biblical or a prophetic one. As Alan Marshall (2016) indicates in "England and nowhere," "The waste land,"

[is] a poem which dealt, in an inevitably *private* way, with the disappearance of those common values which make a *public* language possible, [...] the very thing which Eliot felt no longer existed: a public language, common values. (p. 95)

Eliot also strengthens this idea by changing the meanings and interpretations of traditional symbols. The title "The waste land" is not physically referring to a barren land, it actually refers to the state of modern Europe, and London in particular, after industrialization and most importantly in the aftermath of the Great War. The first two lines of the first part "[A]pril is the cruellest month, breeding/Lilacs out of the dead land" (Eliot, 2004b, p. 61) turns the readers' expectations upside down; the coming of the spring which is always associated with rebirth is considered as cruel, so the life-giving force of April is detested due to the impossibility

of experiencing a rebirth for the lost souls or hopes of humanity. The city, maybe with its blooming spring or its cityscape, is metaphorically a wasteland.

The title of the first part "The burial of the dead" is not followed by any lines that suggest an actual burial ceremony yet it is there to refer to the state of European cities that turned into burial grounds during the war. It also sees London, although the city was not a part of the warfare, as a burial ground as well, where the hopes for the future and civilization are buried according to Eliot. So, the hellish London of the previous poem is first imagined as a burial ground in "The waste land." Later, as the dominant ideas in the poem are memory and desire and an attempt at spiritualism, London, therefore, becomes a purgatory for the lost souls of the dead soldiers or the inhabitants of the city who are caught in a mechanical daily routine:

For Eliot (...) the locality in the city is both identifiable and otherwise, a multitudinous symbolic space in which the overwhelming ghostliness and unreality of modern lives are exposed. The London in *The Waste Land* is haunted by those lost on the battlefields in France during the First World War, but also by those lost in purgatorial realm of day-to-day labour in the city [...]. (Matthews, 2004, p. 40)

When we come to the end of the first part with the lines "[U]nder the brown fog of a winter dawn, /A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many" (Eliot, 2004b, p. 62), as Matthews (2004) also points out, he again refers back to Dante's "Inferno":

A similar obscurity shrouds the city "Under the brown fog of a winter dawn" at the end of "The Burial of the Dead", the opening section of *The Waste Land*. This line is a translation of the medieval Italian poet Dante's vision of hell to somewhere near the contemporary London Bridge. (pp. 39-40)

London Bridge plays an important role not only as a part of the daily routine of working-class people who look like lost souls, but also, as the quotation from Matthews suggests, as an image of descent from Purgatory to Inferno with its lost souls passing through.

Unlike "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in "The waste land," Eliot names specific places in London and lets the reader create a visual map of the places the poet persona mentions or visits. Specifically, in the third part of the poem, "The fire sermon" he not only names streets, but even certain places such as "Cannon Street Hotel" or "Metropole" which help create a very vivid image of the living city. As Marshall (1994) points out "[I]n 'The fire sermon' some of Eliot's most elusive and evocative poetry seems to have been composed of his fascination with the mysterious properties of London names, rich in historical suggestion: Greenwich, the Isle of Dogs, Highbury, Richmond, Kew, and Moorgate" (p. 100). The way

he puts the names of London streets in his lines has a musical tone to it as well, which is an audial attempt dominant in the poem, and it often sounds like an elegy:

‘This music crept by me upon the waters’
 And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
 O City city, I can sometimes hear
 Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
 The pleasant whining of a mandolin
 And a clatter and a chatter from within (Eliot, 2004b, p. 69)

These sounds and images, or to be precise the places he unites, do start to exist together and form a three-dimensional personality of London. So London becomes a depressive, purgatorial or even hellish yet a very sound and lively city that attracts the ear of the reader or the flâneur. Marshall (1994), discusses Eliot’s and this poem’s close relation with audial elements as follows:

The Waste Land can be read [...] as a poem about a place that is made up of sound. The city that Eliot *sees* is a much less animated affair than the one that he listens to. [...] In Eliot’s waste land most of the individual details about people and place are supplied by the ear, a phenomenon which coincides with the stress he later put on what he called the “auditory imagination” [...]. London exists most frequently as a place that Eliot hears; as a place where one is accosted or visited by sound: the gloomy bell of St. Mary Woolnoth; the ingratiating French of Mr. Eugenides; Edmund Spenser singing to the Thames; the island noises of *The Tempest* [...]. The city is traced by the sound it makes, or by the sounds different parts of it make. Music gives directions and defines space. (pp. 99-100)

In this poem, although London is full of audial notes that sound like music, it is still imagined as a very dark and depressive winter city that cannot accept the coming of spring. The yellow October fog of “The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” turns into a brown winter fog in this poem. Even these changes in seasons and colours, if we take them as symbols, can be read as the approaching end of humanity or human civilization with the coming of darkness. These changes inevitably personify the city as a dark, depressing, and hellish entity, reminding the poet persona of all the memories and also the sins of humanity. Remembering is not regarded as a positive human characteristic in this context as it brings suffering. However, the musical tone and the sounds of the city life create a conflict with that depressive image. Thus, disorder, confusion and conflicting ideas about the city dominate the poem; this is also reflected in the chaotic choice in the number of speakers and the conflicting tones in the poem.

However, a repeated line in three different parts can be seen as the only recurrent image, the only constant in the poem: “Unreal city.” Using “Unreal city” for London can be seen

either as a positive symbol that suggests a dream-like character or a negative one that denies the existence or reality of the city, or its trustworthiness. Although the negative implications are more likely to be inferred from the word choice, the poet still chooses to hold on to the same idea of London as a conflicting entity.

His use of Baudelaire's lines in his poem is more than a tribute to a great poet or an intellectual attempt. He actually, by mentioning the French poet Baudelaire whose poetry focuses on Paris and its dark image, creates a connection between Paris and London, the word that connects them is the word he quotes: "hypocrite," which again underlines a personality trait, not being true or real. In the last part of the poem "What the thunder said" he says "Falling towers/ Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/ Vienna London/ Unreal" (Eliot, 2004b, p. 73), he counts all the historical and important capitals of all times, therefore there is another connection created between these historical cities and London. However, although it is a great image on the one hand, on the other hand as it ends with the word "Unreal" which is used for the third time for this city, and with the knowledge that all these great historical cities have fallen as falling towers, the end-image is again a depressive one and also very prophetic.

The prophetic tone is another thing that can be mentioned with respect to the city. Eliot, as he did in "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock," goes back to the water image and mentions the River Thames several times. The River Thames, which is another trademark of London, had been believed to be sacred since pagan times, mentioned in the poem as a river where water nymphs cannot be found anymore:

The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors;
Departed, have left no addresses.
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long. (Eliot, 2004b, p. 67)

As the nymphs are not to be found in the river anymore, and as we see the poet persona crying and singing, the hope for salvation and protection is also lost. The water image, which is traditionally associated with life and rebirth, with the title "Death by water," with the use of words like "drowning," and with the lines "[H]ere is no water but only rock/Rock and no water" (Eliot, 2004b, p. 72), starts to symbolize death in "The waste land."

4. Conclusion

The poem with all its references to rats, old bones, and so on, projects a very bleak and deadly picture of the city. London in this poem explicitly turns into a metaphorical necropolis with all these symbols and is personified as Death itself. The line at the end of the poem “London Bridge is falling down falling down” (Eliot, 2004b, p. 74), which is taken from a nursery rhyme, as Eliot turns all the symbols upside down, recalls the idea of death and even the death or the fall of the city which embraces in itself so many other cities. This can also be seen as a prophetic message for the city and its relation to the individual who loses her/his connection to it.

Matthews (2004), when he discusses Ford Madox Ford and his view of London as a modernist poet, quotes him as follows:

author’s endeavour should be to make the Past, the sense of all the dead Londons that have gone to the producing of this child of all the ages, like a constant ground-bass beneath the higher notes of the Present. In that way the book might, after a fashion, forecast even the Future and contain prophecies. (p. 38)

Going back to the idea of the prophetic tone in Eliot’s *The waste land* and the dominant bleak image of the city it can be suggested that Eliot is also talking about all the Londons from the past to the possible future when he creates these multiple images of cities in cities that look like an entity with its own multiple identities. As it gives hope about a change in or re-establishment of the order in the city, it may also suggest a need for total destruction and rebirth that is denied after the war, because it is impossible to communicate and fully understand one another in this period, the modern city continues to alienate yet also capture its inhabitants.

However, with the last two lines that end the poem, “Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata. / Shantih shantih shantih” (Eliot, 2004b, p. 75) which Eliot takes from “the Hindu *Upanishads*” (Atkins, 2013, p. 70), it can be suggested that the individual living in this wasteland can still have hopes for the future on the condition that s/he “Gives. Sympathizes. Controls [...] self and that outside the self” (Atkins 2013, p. 71), and aims at “Peace which passeth understanding” (Eliot, 2004b, p. 80). With this turn from Western literary and biblical allusions to the spiritualism of the East, one can argue that Eliot still offers a glimmer of hope for the war-stricken European city of the early twentieth century by using the word “shantih” thrice which resonates in the city and becomes a part of the city’s audial panorama. Therefore, it can be suggested that there is still a chance for the city to achieve yet another spiritual and physical rebirth.

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