

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND EXEMPLARY ANALYSES

I admit that two-and-two-makes-four is an excellent thing, but if all things are to be praised, I should say that two-and-two-makes-five is also a delightful thing - Fyodor Dostoevski

In view of the method proposed in Chapter Three, the following discussion will pursue a number of analogous readings of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. The initial section of this chapter will concern the motif of *identity* - of personas, of places, objects and events - and the second section will concern the issue as to how the motif of identity contributes to the thematic concern with sexual decay; the inability of protagonists in the poem to sustain meaningful relationships - and how these are underscored by setting. These exemplary readings are intended to illustrate a possible application of the proposed methodological approach which can be used to perform a reading on any number of passages from the poem analogously with Surrealist painting.

4.1 Identity

Daniel Albright states that "[f]or Eliot, the human self is crazily mutable; my face may seem impassive, but beneath the calm exterior I am shifting, shifting, shifting, growing unrecognisable from moment to moment" (1997:222). It can be postulated that this aspect of shifting and becoming unrecognisable pertains not only to the identities of subjects and settings in the poem, but also to the poem's own "dismembering of spirit, voice, and body" - for example, the "I" who stops in the colonnade in Part I might or might not include Marie (or the "I" who reads much of the night); the "I" who sees fear in a handful of dust could or could not be the same "I" who was left speechless eight lines down, and neither of these necessarily corresponds with the "I" who sees Stetson at the end of Part I (Spurr, 1987:161).

The negation of fixed notions of identity, and the notion of an identity in the process of transformation can be seen in, among others, the personage of Phlebas the Phoenician. If one begins to unravel the references that make up the character of

Phlebas, one sees that the poem textually fragments itself and in so doing, presents a fragmented and ever-changing image of Phlebas. It is clear that the very fabric of his identity compels the reader to bridge a number of textual cracks between signifier signposts that need to be related by means of the extrapolation of a paradigmatic web. In other words, what Riffaterre (1978) calls the “hermeneutic circle” should run its course for Phlebas to emerge as a constructed personage.

Phlebas is a character who is already dead when he is encountered in Part IV - “Death by Water”. In this reading I propose that one could contemplate a painting such as Magritte’s *Collective invention* (figure 26) simultaneously with the reading of Phlebas’s identity. From line 313 onward, the reader encounters the following:

Line 313 Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
 Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
 And the profit and loss.
 A current under sea
 Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
 He passed the stages of his age and youth
 Entering the whirlpool
 Gentile or Jew
 O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
 Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

The Phoenician Sailor's symbolic significance is lodged in its allusive reference to ancient ritual, where an effigy of a deity was cast into the sea to symbolise the death of summer. This interpretation depends upon what Riffaterre (1978:5) calls "literary competence": the reader's familiarity with themes, society's mythologies, and other texts. The first element of the semiotic cluster that constitutes Phlebas, then, signifies ancient ritual accompanied by death by water and concomitant associations of sea-change and transformation. Here the ancient and the present meet in that the reader, not specific to any time but the present, is addressed in the last number of lines. The vocative mode is used, although the tone of the address is in line with the poetic and lyrical register of the passage. While an ancient figure, Phlebas's death is always only a fortnight ago, and his identity is temporally defined and modified by every new reading. The temporal space that is suggested by this is one that eliminates boundaries between antiquity and the here and now - a purely diachronic space.

The reader encounters a similar allusion to an ancient ritual interspersed and juxtaposed with a completely different context, also underlined by a vocative address. Framed within what seems to be a contemporary situation, a protagonist recognises someone called Stetson in a crowd, and the reading of this passage once again constitutes a textual crack in the signification process:

Line 69 There I saw someone I knew, and stopped him crying: 'Stetson!
 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

The forced bonhomie of the register masks the gruesome notion of planting a corpse in one's garden, which in turn emblematises the symbolic ancient ritual of burying an image of a deity in the fields to ensure fertile crops. Therefore, the "ungrammatical" quality, in Riffaterre's terminology, which is brought about by the stylistic dislocation of conversational register superimposed upon a semiotic pointer indicating antiquity, impedes first-level decoding. As such the reader becomes aware of the element of semantic indirection that takes place in the form of distortion, in that the conversational register and the ancient allusive referent condensed into the identity of Stetson result in ambivalence, verging on the nonsensical.

The blandly interrogating "Will it bloom this year?" is another instance where meaning is distorted by its ambiguous simultaneity of present and past, and this further underscores the ambivalence of a dead person who is expected to sprout and bloom like a seed that has been planted in a garden. Furthermore, whoever Stetson is, he belongs, simultaneously, both to the present and to an ancient tribe of people who believe in the symbolic significance of this ritual. According to Donald Childs, Eliot claimed not to have used the name Stetson to refer to anyone in particular, "but simply meant any superior bank clerk: a person in a bowler hat, black jacket, and striped trousers" (1988:131). Stetson is Everyman, and his contemporary and commonplace name also functions as semantically incongruous with ancient myth and ritual, and this juxtaposition constitutes a further hurdle in the decoding of the passage. The adjacency of the mythically significant which asserts itself when "palimpsested" with the contemporary imbues not only this passage, but the entire poem, with an aspect of

member of the Tarot pack "quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself". This arbitrariness of connection reminds one of the Surrealist's apotheosis of Lautréamont's famous image - "the fortuitous encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table" which triggered Surrealist notions of chance encounters and arbitrary associations (Lippard, 1970:3). Clearly, dissimilar aspects of identities can be connected by subjective association - as one finds in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting - with a resultant dream picture that hinges on a new super-reality.

The whirlpool that Phlebas enters (line 319) concerns his identity as well; when one reads about Madame Sosostris' reference to him, one also needs to bear in mind the later reference in Part IV. Adding to Phlebas's dislocated identity is the fact that he is also "not wholly distinct from Ferdinand, Prince of Naples" (Eliot's note to line 218) and he also dissolves into the one-eyed merchant mentioned in line 52.

In the light of the Sosostris passage and Eliot's note to line 218, it is the hybrid-like fusion of Phlebas into Ferdinand that invites closer investigation. Having mentioned Phlebas as a Tarot member, Madame Sosostris says, in parenthesis: "(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)" (line 48). This intertextual reference to Ariel's song to Ferdinand in *The Tempest* concurrently with "Fear death by water" (line 55) provocatively engages the reader to ponder the notions of a sea-change one associates with Shakespeare's play as well as the transformation of Phlebas after his death by water. The cluster of signification that forms the identity of Phlebas therefore attains the added significance, via the allusive reference to Shakespeare's play, of Renaissance notions of a sea-change that complements the sea-change associated with Phlebas's death by water. The phatic vocative address in the form of "Look!" causes a measure of stylistic dislocation in the reading of the passage and emphasises the temporal link of the past with the present. A temporal and semantic transfer is therefore suggested by these fractured references. In Riffaterre's terminology, this is a case of distorting meaning where the ambivalences inherent in the temporal and semantic aspects of these personas coexist within the textual space of the poem. These ambivalent notions are accounted for if the reader sets up a vertical plane of cohesion for the paradigmatic identity of Phlebas/Ferdinand from which the signifying

elements form a web of signification, constantly modulating the fragments of Phlebas's identity.

Consider, furthermore, the description of Phlebas in line 316:

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth[.]

The sea-change that affects the characters in *The Tempest* affects also Phlebas; in fact, the figure from ancient myth, the Prince of Naples and the contemporary reading of Tarot cards all concern the very same identity. The signifying elements in this paradigm thus clearly function by means of displacement and metaphorically suggest sea-change and transmutation.

Magritte's *Collective invention* (figure 26) presents an identity similarly exploring the merging of different aspects of identity. This painting is an example of the Surrealist endeavour to freely associate various entities, and echoes Eliot's rather arbitrary associations of identities.

In this painting the legs and hips of a woman give way to the trunk, fins and head of a fish. The viewer therefore senses that distortion occurs because of the semantic ambivalence in this image. In order to account for this ambivalence the viewer's imagination needs to assert itself. The textual crack that stands, semantically, between the image of a woman and that of a fish can perhaps only be linked if the "ungrammatical" nature of the image is accounted for by imaginative semiotic linkage. Roger Cardinal suggests that Magritte's method is based on outlandish juxtapositions which aim to defer interpretation and urge the viewer to savour the "jagged urgency of its visual shock" (1992:16). Nonetheless, the bafflement one feels upon first viewing the painting is part of the process of engaging with the riddle that constitutes the image. The force of this first shock caused by the unrelated imagery prepares the viewer for the shock of the affinity between the images; what Magritte called the "secret affinity" (Robinson, 1987:156) and what this dissertation calls intuitive image-links afforded by semiotic linkage. Upon second viewing, or more

intense deliberation of the first impressions, the viewer can apprehend a greater sense of connectedness between elements in the image.

Washed ashore, one guesses, the apparition in the painting seems to have undergone, literally, a sea-change. While the technique at the first level seems "realistic" - as commonplace in register as "Here, said she, / Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor" - this device serves to render the fantastic as convincing. The Surrealist notion of the ordinary that masks a poetic beyond therefore comes into play as the mimetic convention of realistic representation is mocked by the very impossibility of the image. It is worth noting that Roger Cardinal emphasises the beach setting, which is prevalent in Surrealist painting, as "an uncensored area wherein any perceptual ambiguity, any provocative confusion, any uncanny visual metaphor can be exposed in the sunlight of a higher lucidity and become irrefutable" (1994:16). This literally sheds light on the uncanny merging of human and fish - and particularly on the provocative inversion of the convention of merging woman with fish (as in a mermaid). The painting seems to question conventional notions of image-manipulation by both referring to and undermining traditional usages of woman-as-fish. In this sense one can recognise parodic imitation: an inter-art discourse that draws attention to conventional artistic notions and stylistic conventions by undermining them.

Like the fragmented references to Ferdinand and Phlebas assume a single identity, the fragments of body and fins in the painting form a new whole once the semantic transfer is made and the notion of fluidity of identity is accepted. Washed ashore, as if after a tempest, one is furthermore inclined to speculate whether the figure be alive or dead, for the head of the fish needs water to breathe, while the human requires air. This hinges on the notion of evolution which suggests that humans emerged from the sea; in this case, like Phlebas and Ferdinand, an incomplete yet compelling fusion of unlikely elements in a state of continuous transformation. However, the different aspects of their identities are simultaneously apprehended.

The amphibious evocations of Magritte's image further echo the paradoxical unity of Ferdinand and Phlebas whose merged identity is bound to neither land nor sea:

Phlebas died a water-death while Ferdinand escaped death by water; their identities seem to be defined by the presence of water and its potential for sea-change as well as its threat of death.

Identities which are neither living nor dead abound in *The Waste Land*, and as such this uncertainty could be read as a thematic paradigm governing one's reading of a number of identities. Compare, for example, the following passage in Part V - "What the Thunder Said":

Line 328 He who was living is now dead
 We who were living are now dying
 With a little patience.

The above quotation from the poem presents the reader with the incongruous state of dying "with a little patience", and this ambivalence constitutes an instance of semantic indirection by means of the distortion of meaning. It furthermore signifies as a component of a larger paradigmatic network concerned with the desire to die. In this regard, the epigraph to *The Waste Land* is perhaps the most significant element of the paradigm. The epigraph was taken from Petronius's *Satyricon*, a Verronian satire¹, and can be translated as: "I once saw the Sibyl of Cumae in person. She was

¹ Heath-Stubbs (1985:25-6) suggests that the Verronian satire provides a generic link with *The Waste Land* insofar as structuring principles and techniques are concerned. This kind of satire was written in alternating prose and verse passages, and the texts abound with literary quotation and allusion, as well as quotations from Greek works in the original language. Also, the version of Petronius's satire that Eliot quotes from exist only in fragmented bits and pieces from the complete manuscript. This is highly suggestive of Eliot's "gluing together" bits and pieces - verse and prose, quotation and allusion, in the original languages (at least seven different languages are featured in *The Waste Land*). Hence Eliot's technique seems to be parodic, in Hutcheon's (1985:6) sense of the word, of the Verronian satire - "repetition with a critical distance". Also significant is the Persian manner of the Verronian satire which endeavours to structure a poem by means of a series of image-links, rather than by means of linear logic (Heath-Stubbs. 1985:26). The same principle, one could suggest, pertains to *The Waste Land* where linearity of sequence is negated in favour of intuitive connections between

hanging in a bottle, and when the boys asked her 'Sibyl, what do you want?' she said, 'I want to die'" (Sullivan, 1982:24). The story goes that the Sibyl was granted a wish, and wished for as many years as the grains of dust she could hold in her hand, but forgot to ask for eternal youth. Impotent in old age, hanging in a bottle, the Sibyl has to live eternally in the face of ridicule. The lines quoted by Eliot to precede his poem come from a scene where the banquet of Trimalchio was presented in opulence and vulgarity. The *Satyricon* is set in Greek-speaking cities in Italy during the reign of Nero, and these societies, according to Heath-Stubbs (1985:24), were obsessed with sex and horrified by the fear of impotence. It is suggested that Eliot draws a parallel between these societies and his contemporary society in post-war Europe.

The epigraph to *The Waste Land* therefore informs and shapes one's reading of the poem once the intertextual reference has been decoded. Sullivan (1982:19) suggests that this epigraph does not, in the fashion of the traditional epigraph, delimit the possibility of the poem by reducing one's reading of the poem to an occasion or specified idea. Rather, it functions to lock certain aspects of theme and structure into place, picking up various echoes, highlighting motifs, foregrounding images and adding fibre to the fragile threads that bind the fragments of the poem (Sullivan, 1982:24). If, as Sullivan proposes, *The Waste Land* constitutes a series of still shots rather than a motion film (with sequential narrative linkages) then the epigraph is a pair of eye-glasses through which one can read and frame the "still shots" offered in the poem. Particularly significant in this regard is the Sibyl's weariness; her cumbersome existence condensed into a desire to die. She is suspended between the inevitability of age and the desire for oblivious death, and this theme reverberates throughout *The Waste Land*.

The notion of the desire to die can now, as a paradigm of signification, inform one's reading of the first lines of the poem:

images. Similarly, I propose, one could regard the Surrealist notion of amalgamating disparate images that negate sequential and causal links in favour of intuitive image-links.

Line 1 April is the cruellest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.
 Winter kept us warm, covering
 Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
 A little life with dried tubers.

It now makes sense that the celebrating of spring is inverted - the coming of the growing season only brings with it the tedium of new life, and the forgetfulness of winter and death emancipate themselves as a desire to die.

The desire for oblivion, to sink into memory or death rather than dealing with the present and with life, emerges elsewhere in the poem. Compare, for example, the hyacinth girl passage:

Line 35 'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
 'They called me the hyacinth girl.'
 - Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
 Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
 Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
 Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
 Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

This passage encapsulates the notion that living is undesirable, that death is elusive, and that the protagonist - like the Sybil - hovers in the uneasy state between life and death, rendered impotent by his situation. Nonetheless, these profound notions are communicated in an almost matter-of-fact register, which, albeit lyrical, belies the intensity of the death-in-life impotence of the protagonist.

One could, for example, compare similar ambivalence and distortion of the boundaries of life and death as found in the state of these personas with the painting *The persistence of memory* (figure 3) by Salvador Dalí. The humanoid figure in the foreground is neither person nor viscera, but a fusion of grotesque elements - facial features, melting intestines, drooping limbs. It seems weary and drawn into its own oblivion of sleep or death. The painting leaves a textual crack by not disclosing the identity of the figure, and it is left to the imagination of the viewer to transfer the

semantic significance of viscera to facial features to possible human-like apparition. This painting, more than being mere grotesquerie, compels because of the density of associations accumulated in a nearly abstract image. Signification here stretches beyond the first level of decoding - where the eye may be fooled by the seeming realism of the scene - and points to levels of unconscious awareness present in the painterly text. The figure's being neither living nor dead could support the notion of play between the conscious and the unconscious; it surrenders itself to the desert wasteland, its possible (unconscious) desire for life manifest in the mirage of water in the background, but nonetheless seemingly inviting the oblivion of life beyond consciousness: death.

This figure in a "real" landscape is disturbing in its adherence to the conventions of realism which seem to convince on the first level of decoding. However, the mimetic aspect of realism is subverted by its own conventions and the viewer finds himself confronted with a painterly text that extends beyond the real into the realm of the unconscious where merging and fusion of the possible and impossible can coexist. As the figure transcends the boundaries of logic, its death-in-life status also troubles the viewer; clear indications of either are ostensibly absent. If one reads the title of the painting - *The persistence of memory* - as an epigraph, one could suggest that the painting communicates the tedium of remembrance; that the past haunts the present. This figure, like Eliot's Sibyl, seems almost pathetic in its demeanour, and like the Sibyl, it is the mixing of memory and desire - to die - and to be relieved of the dread of the present that strike the reader and viewer as the pre-eminent theme.

Similar instances of the life-in-death paradigm occur where the boundaries between life and death signify in their absence, for example:

Line 60 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.

The last line from this passage refers to Dante's *Inferno* and particularly to Purgatory, where the dead come to life. Therefore, a textual crack appears between the two last

lines where "A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many / I had not thought death had undone so many". The crowd in contemporary London, it is suggested, becomes the lost souls themselves, suspended between life and death. Ambivalence, uncertainty and anguish perpetuate this instance of distortion where the present and the literary past blend into an uneasy fusion. Underscored by the Baudelairean "[u]nreal city" which signifies a city full of dreams ("Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves" - Eliot's note to line 60) the reader has to surrender to the dream-like unreality of real, albeit faceless crowds in Modern London, merging into Dante's lost souls. The one defines the other; London's crowds and Dante's souls are at the same time distinct but inseparable, and require the simultaneous apprehension of both. The textual placement of these images of crowds facilitates the fusion that takes place on the vertical plane of cohesion.

This technique where aspects of an identity fade in and out to allow for simultaneity is suggestive of a similar quality found in Dalí's visual pun paintings. For example, *Mae West* (figure 14) shows the face of a woman that is both distinct yet inseparable from the interior presented in the painting; both face and interior are present, and the tension of their simultaneity creates the flux of identity. The ostensible textual cracks challenge the viewer to transfer aspects from the one image to the other in order to achieve simultaneity of awareness. Just as the crowd in Modern London fuses into Dante's souls, the face of the woman and the interior fade into and out of each other, inseparable but distinct. In this painting one could speak of semantic indirection by means of distortion in the ambivalent coexistence of aspects of the images. One could further postulate that the painting creates meaning, since the visual pun exists only in the textual space of the painting and the unrelated images would not be similarly meaningful outside of their present iconographical interrelatedness. Within the textual space of the painting, the images change constantly with each glance; *how* the viewer looks at the painting determines what he sees, but under the pressure of the pun the images fade in and out of focus. Each view - the room and the woman's face - is mutually dependent upon the other, like the crowd over London Bridge and Dante's lost souls in the poem mutually depend on each other for their textual coexistence, and fade in and out of focus. The mechanism of textual cracks that can be bridged if the reader or viewer takes cognisance of the inferred co-dependence of

images function on the first level of decoding to confuse, and on the second semiotic reading, to establish an infinite instability of identity suggestive of a beyond that lurks beneath textual cracks.

The notion of faceless crowds in the poem, therefore, could be established as another paradigmatic web of signification. From the crowds that flow over London bridge, temporally dislocated but not indistinct from Dante's crowds, a large textual gap separates the next reference to crowds in line 366:

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are the hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth[.]

In this instance the topographical separation of these passages in the poem is indicative of morpho-syntactic fragmentation, which demands that the vertical plane of cohesion set up by the signifying network of the crowd paradigm is expanded to incorporate the signifying elements in the passage above. These images, equally haunting as the London/Dante's crowd where "[s]ighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled" (line 64) occur in the last part of the poem - "What the Thunder Said" and also concur with Dante's lost souls in the hallucinatory presence of faceless crowds in haunting surroundings. Significantly, this last reference to crowds is adjacent to a passage similarly infused with hallucinatory awareness:

Line 359 Who is the third who always walks beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
- But who is that on the other side of you?

Both the above passages begin with a question - signalling existential uncertainty - spurred by the unreality of the situation and the concomitant doubt and anxiety. Albright (1997:230) says of the speakers in Eliot's poetry that they are: "...subject to all sorts of confusion, for they lack any criteria for distinguishing the hallucinatory

from the plausible; when self-possession gutters, they are in danger of devolving to hallucinations, chimeras, for their bodies cannot hold onto human shapes". It is therefore telling that Eliot's note to line 360 reads: "The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton's): it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was *one more member* than could actually be counted" (Eliot's italics). Nonetheless, in spite of Eliot's note, these lines also strike one as referring to the appearance of Christ to the disciples on their way to Emmaus:

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising him (Luke 24:13-16).

The allusive significance of both Christ and the Antarctic explorers sparks the notion of fluid association and also reminds one of the beginning of Part IV - "He who was living is now dead" (line 328) and therefore connects with the paradigm of being neither dead nor alive. Furthermore, if one takes both the association with Christ and Eliot's note into account, a number of significant aspects emerge. In the first instance, the question that introduces the passage - "Who is the third who always walks beside you?" (line 359) speaks of uncertainty regarding identity. In the second, Eliot's reference to Antarctic explorers fades into a Biblical narrative. These two disparate narratives are yoked together by thematic cohesion. This common thread assists the reader to bridge the textual crack between them where semantic indirection asserts itself by the ambivalent simultaneity of narratives.

That Eliot admits to not knowing the particulars of the Antarctic expedition emphasises the delusional nature of the account rather than empirical or factual certainty. It follows that the reader cannot establish a fixed reading, and hence not a fixed interpretation. What can be asserted, however, is that narratives exist simultaneously and as such facilitate instability of identity. The delusional aspect therefore overrides certainty and concerns for fixtured. Furthermore, the hooded figure

in the passage above ostensibly connects with the hooded hordes - "Who are the hooded hordes swarming" (line 368) - whose identity is also uncertain. It seems as if the hooded figure in the Emmaus passage has multiplied into hordes of faceless clones; the textual crack between the passages is therefore bridged by the thematic cluster of signification from Dante's crowds in London to the Shackleton/Emmaus party to the hooded crowds in this last passage.

In this regard, one is drawn to, for example, Magritte's *Golconde* (figure 27) where the image of a bowler-hatted man (so frequently featured alone in Magritte's paintings that it seems to have lost its identity) multiplies, as if in a delusion, into a crowd of bowler-hatted men, suspended in the air, punctuating the entire surface of the painting. Semiotically "empty", these images of the same bowler-hatted man function as schisms in the painting. They are all the same man, and having become "faceless" by endless repetition, transcend the identity of a single persona to become anyone and everyone. One is also reminded of the persona of Stetson, who is, according to Childs, an Everyman figure in a bowler hat and black jacket (1988:131).

The rhythmic repetition of the image in the painting is an instance of creating, where the textual space of the painting serves to make meaningful what would otherwise not signify. This is an instance of textual creation similar to Eliot's "hooded hordes" - here the alliteration could function within the textual space of the poem to enhance the notion of multiplication and exasperation. The proliferation of clones in Magritte's painting and the multiplication of Eliot's hordes have semiotic significance by virtue of their repetition - according to Riffaterre, "repetition is in itself a sign" (1978:49) which creates rhythm and heightens emotional tension.

One's first reading of Magritte's painting, nevertheless, lures one into wanting to succumb to the apparent realism of the scene; but soon enough one realises the impossibility of conventional logic in this work. Rather, one is invited to recall all the other instances in which the artist has used the Chaplin-like figure; this painting then constitutes their improbable merging and meeting-place. The pedantic handling of the oil medium, straightforward in its adherence to conventions of realism, echoes the simple, albeit anxious, conversational register in the passage dealing with the

Antarctic explorers - the surface is simple, uncomplicated, masking the chaos it implies at the second level of decoding.

The unfixed identity of physical space provides another instance where slipperiness prevails over fixture. If one views Yves Tanguy's *Mama, Papa is wounded!* (figure 2) one sees a space that is neither real nor imagined - a psychic space evocative of nightmare and fear. Although the way in which the empty space and faded horizon are presented leads one to consider, on the first level, to regard the scene to represent a landscape, none of the qualities of a landscape such as natural light, trees or mountains present themselves. These textual cracks between what is perceived and what seems to be present in its absence are brought about by the manipulation of the conventions of realism. This space in the painting is defined by the merging of the real with the implausible. Real and fantastically unreal domains have merged to the extent that the space one sees can only exist in one's mind. This ambiguity and incongruity suggest semantic indirection achieved by means of distortion. Similarly, the real London Bridge one finds in line 62 (preceded by "Unreal City" in line 60) merges with Dante's crossing to Purgatory in what seems to be a hallucinatory transfer from dreary here-and-now awareness to hellish anguish. "Unreal City" occurs again in line 207 - the same city constituted of London and damnation. Unreal also is the image presented in line 371, once again preceded by a question:

Line 371 What is the city over the mountains
 Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
 Falling towers
 Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
 Vienna London
 Unreal[.]

These apocalyptic images reminiscent of World War are as hallucinatory and dislocating as they are real in their reference to actual cities. The reader becomes aware of a grammatical schism in the incomplete utterances that follow the question in line 371. Nonetheless, these fragmented utterances assume significance in their

metaphoriticity - seemingly encapsulating all cities and being emblematic of the unreal quality of these.

One is reminded of, for example, similar apocalyptic implications in Max Ernst's *Europe after the rain* (figure 28). Here the rain has performed the same destruction as war and then becomes a delusional site for the rubble that is left. The whole of Europe, it seems, is captured in a single canvas made up of broken images, much like Eliot's apocalyptic post-war world is constituted of broken cities whose names are uttered in an incomplete sentence.

To accomplish the broken images the viewer sees in *Europe after the rain*, the artist has employed the technique of *frottage*. This technique involves making a rubbing of a textured surface rather than using traditional painterly techniques. In this way the spontaneous marks obtained by the instruments of the artist attain expressive quality in themselves. Although rubbings have typically been used by archaeologists to make copies of stone or metal reliefs, Surrealist artists discovered that abstract patterns and textures could be transferred and worked into recognisable images. *Frottage* therefore serves to simulate the creation of fantastic forms (Feldman, 1987:275). Ernst modified the *frottage* technique to suit his own purposes by placing a freshly painted canvas over a relief texture and then scraping away part of the paint. The unscraped paint left in the valleys and crevices created a pattern that corresponded to the texture underneath - a mode of creation that provided Ernst with "an unusually ambiguous poetic technique which took figuration to the bounds of abstract simplification" (Julius, 1991:157). Therefore, in Ernst's painting, the viewer sees fragmented bits that function as traces of existing textures, ambiguously carrying with them the weight of the already there, modified by the artist's hand. It is the notions of traces and textures beyond the surface that invite comparison with Eliot's technique in the passage of the cities above. The names of the cities function as bits of already existing material, modified in their fragmentary nature by the use of the word "Unreal": beyond the words on the page lies the texture of destruction and apocalypse, and the names are the traces left in the unreal situation. This instance of semantic indirection which functions as distortion points to the ambivalence of traces that signify an entire world of metropolitan destruction. It could be argued that this

corresponds to the traces found in Ernst's painting that signify both destruction and reference to the artful creation and destruction of textures beyond the surface of the canvas.

While London is the pervasive presence in many of *The Waste Land's* references to the city, these cities become one conglomeration, and like the landscape in Tanguy's painting *Mama, Papa is wounded!* and Ernst's *Europe after the rain* the real and imagined assert their simultaneity. Existing, therefore, only in the mind of the reader and viewer, it is impossible to establish spatial identity - real or not, living or dead. The city is furthermore inhabited, like Tanguy's painting, by phantom-like personas constituted by fragments reminiscent of humans. In Eliot's city, the people are "... in rats' alley / where the dead men lost their bones" (lines 115-6). Both *Europe after the rain* and *Mama, Papa is wounded!* seem to concur, in their nightmarish and apocalyptic implications, with Sullivan's description of *The Waste Land* as a dark prophecy where a voice passes over the sticks and rubble of a ruined landscape (1982:23).

The face of the city constantly transforms under the pressure of its contexts in the poem - Dantesque or, as part of a nursery rhyme that has lost its innocence and becomes a stark echo of the falling towers encountered earlier, "London bridge is falling down falling down falling down" (line 426). This reference to the well-known nursery rhyme signifies as an apocalyptic image, and not as playful and trivial. Thematically, the London of the nursery rhyme fuses with the real London and Dante's lost souls to create a temporally and semantically multi-layered paradigm of city and destruction and death. All the cities - Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna and London become "falling towers" (line 373) and this is echoed again in line 382:

And upside down in the air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing from empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In these lines the nightmarish inversion of gravitational forces echoes the notion of the unreal as found in *Mama, Papa is wounded!* where the nightmare space assumes a real threat in its inversion of visual conventions.

Considering these indefinable spaces and fragmented remnants of cities, one could make the connection also with *The double dream of spring* (figure 29) where the real city and the drawing of the city in a frame - signifying the unreal or mental image - are presented to the viewer. The viewer then becomes aware of two different levels of signification in this painting, where the represented city and landscape serve as backdrop for another city that is framed within the larger frame of the painting. Present also in the painting is a man with his back to the viewer and the head of a mannequin, appearing from the right and glancing at the viewer (although it has no eyes). The real city - empty and rolling into a landscape void - seems to be dominated by the looming presence of an unreal construction of a city, contained in a frame and made up of liquid half-objects suggestive of incompleteness; a city of imaginary proportions, transparent like in a dream, to be completed by the viewer's intuitive image-linking processes. The disproportionately large figure in the framed painting hovers over the constructed city. Small figures in the framed picture echo the "real" figures in the painting, and evoke a parallel with Eliot's city where eerie, unconnected presences, indefinable spaces and echoes between the real and the constructed abound. Like in the poem, Chirico makes use of fragments of figures (such as the figures of the man and the mannequin) who echo Eliot's faceless city inhabitants. The viewer of the painting is left to complete the figures as well as the fragments - real and imaginary - of architectural elements himself, as the reader of *The Waste Land* has to construct a mental image of the city from the fragments offered in the poem. It also seems as if the fragments of city and personas in both the painting and the poem do not only signify as parts of a unified whole, but demand of one to venture into a more profound level of engagement to discover unexplained metaphysical relationships between them. These relationships between fragments of city and bits of personae elude fixture; the fragments appear like liquid glimpses of awareness that flow in and out of consciousness, in a constant state of transmutation. Chirico himself explained the haunting quality of his cities and their disquieting inhabitants:

Everything gazed at me with mysterious and questioning eyes. And then I realised that every corner of the palace, every column, every window possessed a spirit, an impenetrable soul...everything had two aspects: the current aspect which we see nearly always and which ordinary men see, and the ghostly and metaphysical aspects, which only rare individuals may see in moments of clairvoyance and metaphysical abstraction (quoted in Munsterberg, 1970:62).

Although a tad presumptuous, Chirico's sentiments regarding the double nature of things ring true for both his work and Eliot's poem, where objects, people and places hover between the "current aspect" and the metaphysical, haunting beyond.

It seems as if, besides phantom-like personas, the city of *The Waste Land* is a rats' haven and that the presence of these disease-carrying animals intensifies notions of decay prevalent in the poem. Consider, for example, the following (relevant words to the discussion to follow have been reproduced in bold):

Line 115 I think we are in **rats'** alley
 Where the **dead** men lost their **bones**.

The next encounter with rats is preceded by a reference to "rattle":

Line 185 But at my back in a cold blast I hear
 The **rattle** of **bones**, and a chuckle spread from ear to ear.

 A **rat** crept softly through the vegetation
 Dragging its slimy belly on the bank[.]

Then, a few lines down -

Line 191 Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
 And on the king my father's **death** before him.
 White bodies naked on the low damp ground
 And **bones** cast in a little low dry garret,
 Rattled by **rat's** foot only, year to year.

What is striking about these passages is the omnipresence of death and bones - probably human - in the presence of rats. This grim image of decay and disease grows in intensity if one makes the semantic and phonetic transfer from *rat* to *rattle*. The rat that rattles the bones and the presence of death all merge into the image of the rat, the one inextricably bound to each other in the context of the poem. Therefore, within the textual space of the poem the rat becomes emblematic of death and decay, and this is facilitated by semantic indirection in the shape of displacement - the rat metaphorically stands for the rattle of bones. One could, furthermore, suggest that the ambivalence contained in the rat/rattle/bones paradigm also constitutes an instance of semantic indirection by distortion, because of the incongruous elements that are condensed into a single paradigmatic awareness by means of associative connection.

It would be possible to explore, for example, an analogous reading of the paradigm above with Magritte's painting *The red model* (figure 8). Here the foot and shoe that merge present a shift from one aspect of a theme to another related aspect - the foot, signifying a body part, blends into the shoe, which covers the human foot. By virtue of association (like the rat and the rattling of bones) the transfer is made - but with equally startling and unsettling consequences. Magritte's foot-shoes are disturbing in their similarity which nonetheless constitutes a departure from one's comfortable associations with feet and shoes. Furthermore, for a foot to become a shoe death needs to precede the transformation, and this echoes *The Waste Land's* thematic concern with death and decay. The signifying process in Magritte's painting and in the case of the rat/rattle/bones in the poem seems to be indexical - like a shoe is indexical of a foot, the sound of rattling bones becomes indexical of the presence of the rat. Therefore, one's settled association of foot with shoe and the seemingly unthreatening association of rat with rattle hold the potential of shock, even disgust. Apparently obvious associations of identity therefore have the ability to transcend the ordinary and become grotesque; and this process also heightens one's awareness of the paradigmatic theme in the poem. If one were to encounter the word *rattle* again, one's reading would be informed by the association of a rat that rattles human bones, ultimately signalling death and decay.

A similar instance - albeit less gruesome - of fusion occurs in the poem when the typist, her lover departed, "... puts a record on the gramophone" (line 256). The next line, after a typographical break, reads

line 257 'This music crept by me upon the waters' [.]

Once again, one is reminded of *The Tempest* by virtue of the intertextual significance of this quotation of Ariel's song. However, the mechanism behind the relationship of the lines is compelling. It can be proposed that one needs to extract from the indexical presence of the record on the gramophone that music is heard, and therefore the connection can be made to the next line. The crack that exists between these lines constitutes an instance of morpho-syntactic fragmentation: the adjacency of the lines suggests that the reader has to fill in the crack by decoding the intertextual reference to *The Tempest* to establish the musical association and concurrent thematic implications. In so doing, the reader is also struck by the disparate stylistic registers - from the purely descriptive "puts a record on the gramophone" to the dramatic and lyrical "This music crept by me upon the waters". In order to unravel the effect of the stylistic dislocation, one could look for the textual and temporal significance of these lines - the one from the contemporary and the "real", and the other with its origins in the Shakespearian play which signals a temporal distance. But, when the two musical references blend, the reader is struck by the notion of simultaneity - *The Tempest* blends into the present to suggest a multi-layered temporal awareness. This use of temporally dislocated register bound by thematic cohesion constitutes an instance of what Nicholas Bakhtin calls "the diachronic" scale of language which is, according to the author, peculiar to Eliot (1985:337). By placing the *Tempest* reference adjacent to the normal scale of poetic diction, Eliot achieves a "poignant dissonance" between textual syntagmas: the allusive signifier belongs to a past stratum of English poetic diction and imbues the present situation with its associations.

The figure of Tiresias in *The Waste Land* presents the reader with another instance where identity is modified under the pressure of the context of the poem, and where the reader is invited to explore the textual cracks that surround the apprehension of his identity. Tiresias is both soothsayer and shepherd, taken from *Oedipus Rex* where he had to fulfil the role of the one with terrible knowledge; where Oedipus' incest is known to him only. He therefore is characterised by *knowing more*, and also by being both man and woman. The Tiresias myth as told by Ovid (Larissy, 1990:62-3) in his notes tells the story of Tiresias finding two copulating snakes in the desert. Upon hitting them with his staff he turned into a woman. When, seven years later, he came across two snakes again, he hit them again - and he became a man again. Since he has then experienced being both male and female, Jove called him in to adjudicate a quarrel between him (Jove) and Juno. The quarrel concerned sexual pleasure; Juno claimed women experienced greater pleasure, while Jove argued the contrary. When Tiresias supported Jove, Juno struck him with blindness, and to compensate Jove gave Tiresias the gifts of prophecy and a long life. Blind but equipped with the gift of prophecy Tiresias "perceived" the story of Oedipus, the most important events to be "witnessed" by him. He was the only one, initially, who was aware of the incest of Oedipus which caused the land Thebes to become an infertile waste land suffering from a curse. In Riffaterre's terms, the reader has to rely on his literary competence in order to extract the mythical and literary significance of the figure of Tiresias in the poem.

Therefore, although a clairvoyant, Tiresias is also blind - but familiar with animal copulation. This complicates one's reading of his multi-layered character - for example, when he is introduced into the poem, he says:

Line 218 I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
 Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can *see* (my italics) [.]

This strikes the reader with a sense of disbelief; Tiresias "seeing" is a paradox that transcends logic but invites ambivalence. Furthermore, what he "sees" is bland, uninspiring intimacy between the typist and a young man with bad skin, related as though copulation by animals. A textual crack therefore emerges between the figure

of Tiresias and his present situation; what happens in the poem presents the reader with an incongruous situation that can be interpreted to echo Tiresias's knowledge of incest and animal copulation. The incongruity of the seer and dislocating new surroundings constitutes a kind of juxtaposition that abounds in Surrealist painting. One could, for example, look at the following two Surrealist paintings in this regard - Giorgio de Chirico's *Love Song* (figure 30) and René Magritte's *Ready-made posy* (figure 21).

In the first instance, Chirico's painting is characterised by incongruous images that suggest semantic, syntactic and stylistic cracks between these elements on the first level of decoding - according to Franco Ricci, "there is no sentence structure" present in the painting (1996:84). In the painting one sees the head of Apollo Belvedere, decapitated, suspended on the side of a building. Next to it, nailed to the surface, is a red rubber glove and in the foreground, a green ball. The background is made up of an industrial city scene to the left, and classical Florentine buildings to the right. Although, therefore, the objects are recognisable, they appear to be listed rather than integrated in what could be a meaningful whole. The painting is executed in the matter-of-fact realism of the nineteenth-century *trompe-l'oeil* mode and seems to present a still-life, thus reinforcing the allusion to this stylistic tradition. One could infer that this stylistic allusion, on the first level of reading, suggests that one's reading of the poem will be informed by the *trompe-l'oeil* genre. However, the allusive structure in the painting is more complex and does not satisfy this rather obvious expectation. The head of the Belvedere figure takes one back to classical times - the Apollo Belvedere known today is a Roman marble copy after a Greek original. The Belvedere is also a clairvoyant (bel - beautiful; vedere - to see). His head, which is the only aspect retained in this painting, presents blind eyes which have no pupils. Rendered impotent, he (like Tiresias) only has inner vision; larger than life, both soothsayers seem out of place in their rather mundane present contexts. The ambivalence and juxtaposition of the painting and Tiresias's presence in the poem hinge on the absurd - but these incongruities which manifest as textual cracks could be significant if one accepts the notion of simultaneity: the grandiose past and the mundane present could coexist on a diachronic temporal plane of awareness.

The objects around Apollo Belvedere's head assume significance on second reading; the glove reminds one of childbirth, being made of rubber and being red, which is emblematic of blood (Bohn, 1991:177). The possible significance of the ball is more elusive; it suggests potential movement or planetary shapes, and its green colour is a foil for the red of the glove. Clearly, the mystery of the painting lingers and does not allow the viewer to disclose its secrets easily. Ricci asserts that any association between objects in Chirico's paintings is achieved by visual links that may or may not be logical (1996:83). Conclusive readings of such an idiosyncratic text, therefore, remain impossible.

However, there are a number of textual markers that allow for some interpretative speculation. Willard Bohn (1991:178) suggests that the link between the Belvedere and Tiresias is a generic one, where the soothsayer is blind but has inner vision. Like Tiresias, the Belvedere is also the one burdened with knowing, but confined to a startlingly inappropriate context. Therefore, although the painting seems reluctant to disclose its secrets, one could look for possible signs in the surroundings of the soothsayer, where Belvedere anachronistically finds himself in a grim industrial world, and this also pertains to Tiresias. Compare Tiresias' situation:

Line 215 At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
 Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
 Like a taxi throbbing waiting[.]

Both soothsayers, imbued with knowledge and carrying with them the weight of antiquity, are left out of place in their new environments, where both situations are somehow infused with some rather unromantic overtures of sexuality and procreation.

If, on the other hand, one looks at the figure of Tiresias in *The Waste Land* analogously with Magritte's *Ready-made posy* (figure 21) one is struck by another set of correspondences. The painting presents one with the figure of spring taken unchanged, as an intertextual signifier, from Botticelli's *Primavera* painted onto the back of a bowler-hatted man, who is looking over a balcony and towards a forest. Tiresias as a character was similarly taken "unchanged" from the Thebian drama; he is still representative of both sexes, retains his clairvoyance and is presented as an old

man "who ha[s] sat by Thebes below the wall / And walked among the lowest of the dead" (lines 245-6). The painting, by virtue of its presentation of a female figure on the back of a man, is suggestive of similar hermaphroditic qualities. Compare also Eliot's note to line 218:

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

This suggests a parallel with Magritte's painting - a figure taken unchanged from an earlier work, superimposed into a new situation which has the effect of modifying the identities of both the figure from the earlier text and the new contextual frame. Also, stylistic dislocation occurs where the Botticellian style is superimposed onto the rather straightforward painterly realism of the contemporary situation. This incongruity suggests a textual crack which guides the viewer to consider the relationship of the real and artifice - if these two aspects are "palimpsested", how does it affect one's reading of them? In a sense, both are presented as part of the present, but the intertextual significance of the *Primavera* provides an entire set of associations that the viewer brings with him when engaging with this painting. This anachronism of image and present context could echo Eliot's use of the diachronic scale of language where allusive signifiers belonging to a past stratum of English poetic diction are adjacent to the normal scale of poetic diction. The *Primavera* allusion not only brings with it the association of Botticelli's painting, but also the stylistic characteristics of Quattrocentian Florentine painting, and these associations permeate one's reception of the painting.

Taking its cue also from the past, the mythical presence of Philomela in *The Waste Land* presents the reader with a complex yet compelling instance of fluid identity. If, as Eliot suggested in his note to line 218, "all the women are one woman", then Philomela seems to occupy a central position in this paradigm of women characters -

if not only by virtue of her presence, then also because her fragmented image haunts the poem and presents affinities with the other women to create a web of signification. The first encounter with Philomela is in line 99. However, not only the allusive reference but also its placement are important and both need to be taken into account:

Line 98 As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
 Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
 And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
 'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.

The story of Philomela, as recounted briefly in footnote 13 to Chapter Two is one of brutality and metamorphosis. Eliot's reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (in the note to line 99) confirms this, and sets the tone for experiencing the identity of Philomela as one in constant flux and change. The window that "gave upon the sylvan scene" (line 98) draws attention to the notion of a story within a story, and as such reminds one of Chirico's *Great metaphysical interior* (figure 11) and Magritte's *The human condition* (figure 10). In these paintings the present scene gives way to another, fictionally constructed image, in the same way that the window in the poem opens the preceding narrative into the Philomela allusion. Therefore semantic indirection occurs in the internal transfer made in the poem and the painting from the "real" to the constructed. The real and fictional, however, are mutually dependent on one another for their existence, so that the two sign-systems - that of the seemingly real and that of the fictional beyond - seem to resign their fixed boundaries and create cracks in the reader and the viewer's reading of the narratives. However, the "real" allows for the fictional to occupy the most intensive concentration of narrative - in the paintings, what occurs in the constructed frame is the focus, and the sylvan scene emerging as through a window also establishes Philomela as a central narrative.

With regard to the very placement of references in the poem, the first Philomela reference occurs sandwiched between a scene alluding to *Antony and Cleopatra* ("The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne" - line 77 onwards) and another scene, which describes a woman with an undisclosed identity:

Line 108 Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
 Spread out in fiery points
 Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

In the first instance, the placement of the *Antony and Cleopatra* allusion is the narrative that precedes and gives way to the Philomela story through the window in the poem. This suggests a positional link between Philomela and Cleopatra. In the second instance, the woman whom one finds after the Philomela allusion has hair that "Spread out in fiery points / Glowed into words, then would be savagely still" (lines 109-10). Her *hair*, which is emblematic of the woman herself, becomes "savagely still". This echoes the savage silencing of Philomela by her assailant, and links her to the elusive woman. Further references to silence also confirm this connection of Philomela with the woman:

Line 104 And other withered stumps of time
 Were told upon the walls; staring forms
 Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
 Footsteps shuffled on the stair.

"[S]taring forms", "hushing" and "shuffled" semantically link these lines with the silence of Philomela and the woman whose hair spread out in fiery points. By surrendering ordinary logic, one can apprehend an identity constituted of the simultaneous presence of different personas, and the fusion which incorporates the mythical and the real, the temporally distant and the here and now, can become a paradigmatic construct of signifying webs. What is read as Philomela is a fusion of Cleopatra, the nightingale with all its associations of song and the mythical savagery, and the woman who brushes her hair. This is an instance of morpho-syntactic fragmentation where the physical position of signification clusters in the poem alters the reading of passages and allows for the simultaneous apprehension of disparate elements to blend into a paradigm of signification.

The next reference to Philomela adds to the cluster of signification that contains her identity. Once again, the Philomela allusion occurs in between other references that modify and add to her identity. The fragments that constitute the allusion to Philomela read as follows:

Line 203 Twit twit twit
 Jug jug jug jug jug jug
 So rudely forc'd
 Tereu[.]

The reader is confronted by an ungrammatical utterance which, incomplete as a sentence, nonetheless contributes to the semantic and semiotic significance of these fragments of speech. This passage echoes, intratextually, the "'Jug Jug' to dirty ears" encountered in line 103. The sound "jug" could be interpreted to be the stammering noises made by the muted victim, or - in view of the "dirty ears" - could signify as being crudely onomatopoeic of sexual intercourse. "Twit twit twit" reinforces this - this is the sound made by a bird, a nightingale in this case. According to Riffaterre's model, such instances of ungrammatical language will begin to signify in the confines of the text, and the different possible interpretations "jug" and "twit" offer within the poem attest to this.

"So rudely forc'd" also echoes line 100 - "So rudely forced", but the omission of the "e" makes the present utterance at once more "poetic" and more pathetic, just as the last "s" is omitted from "Tereu", the name of Philomela's assailant, as if her inability to speak prohibits her from speaking his name, but the fragment that she utters points towards him, as if she herself "[g]lowed into words, then would be savagely still". Unable to speak, though, she still fills "all the desert with inviolable voice" (line 101). The fragments of the allusion therefore signify as a cluster of Philomela's identity - together with all the associations of rape, violation and metamorphosis - into a nightingale, but also into other women. Although, then, the reader has to construct an identity for Philomela by active interpretation of textual elements that function as signifying clusters, the disparate elements - twit, jug, a woman with long hair, the "change of Philomel" - constitute a paradigm of identity once the semantic indirections are decoded.

When investigating possible visual counterparts, two of Magritte's paintings come to mind. In the first instance, *The rape* (figure 31) suggests a similar thematic concern as encountered in the discussion of Philomela's identity, who was "so rudely forc'd".

The face of a woman transforms into her body, and the violation of her face and body constitutes the rape. Her features become her sexuality; she is perceived as a person known only by violation and who carries the evidence of her assault on her face. If one reads this image, the simultaneous or double awareness of face and stripped body suggests that the fragmented body/face suffers *constant* mutilation. Thematically the visual pun afforded by this double awareness radiates from all aspects in the image.

The woman in the painting is also silenced, for where her mouth should be one sees a pubic triangle which strikes one as being as crude as "jug jug to dirty ears". One also learns of Philomela in the poem only through her violation, and in the reader's mind she is constituted by this event. Far from being straightforwardly laughable, the broken account of Philomela's misfortune does strike a note of absurdity, pathos and also humour (what Sullivan, 1982:23 calls "urban humour") as does this painting, where the violated face of the woman is as humorous as it is emphatically pathetic. The incongruous yoking together of different elements therefore functions not only to underline the horror of violation, but also points to the absurd and the painfully humorous.

Comparing Philomela's case with *The eternally obvious* (figure 32), also by Magritte, invites one to consider another aspect of her multifaceted identity. In this painting the body of a woman is literally fragmented, each fragment carrying significance as part of her identity, so that the culmination of fragments constitutes more than a mere presentation of a woman. The woman's violently disrupted body concurs with the violation of Philomela's body, but also with the disruptive narrative that conveys her story. Not only is Philomela dismembered and fragmented, but the poem itself conveys her violation in fragmented instances, so that the reader also senses textual dismemberment. The references to Philomela occur in bits and pieces, interspersed with other references that frame the mythical allusions, and the reader has to construct an interpretation of her identity in order to overcome the confusion caused by the morpho-syntactic fragmentation of the elements that constitute her identity. As the woman in the painting has been taken apart and assembled into frames while leaving "cracks" that the viewer has to complete, Philomela's story and her identity are conveyed in scraps of text, bits of referential signifiers that are suggestive of a

complete person, leaving the reader to fill in the textual cracks. This device of literally fragmenting an image of a person recalls the notion of grammatical schism as encountered in the "jug jug" / "twit twit" and "Tereu" utterances; incomplete sentences and words that work together to signify a whole person.

The disrupted and fragmented narrative of Philomela also invites analogous reading with, for example, Magritte's *The blank cheque* (figure 33). In this painting the figure of a woman on a horse is presented as fragments, where the environment merges with and overlaps the equestrienne figure; what constitutes background and figure becomes questionable and ultimately inseparable. The viewer therefore encounters schisms in the visual given that read, literally, as cracks in the image and environment where "textual" unity is expected. One reads the painting, on the first level, from left to right; convinced at first glance of the realism of the scene portrayed. Then one apprehends the visual cracks and begins to play with the idea of how to complete the picture, how to link the fragments in order to construct a meaningful whole. The suggestive cat-and-mouse game that characterises the signifying process in this painting reminds one of a riddle that is being unravelled - and emphasises that the process of interpretation takes precedence over fixed interpretation.

Therefore, what is *absent* from the figure of the woman (and her environment) signifies as much than what is present - if not more - in the process of linking the signifying fragments. It resembles literally a blank cheque which one can fill in. The painting speaks more subtly, more elusively and ultimately more compellingly because of the absences or cracks. This parallels the Philomela narrative which is disrupted by contextual dislocation and the overlapping of bits of narrative. One only sees Philomela as fragments in the poem, but the active interpretative process allows one to compose a fluid identity for her - based on the links with the particular context within which the fragmented allusions to the myth are presented. Very similar processes of deciphering and constructing occur in one's reading of Magritte's painting.

The second reference to Philomela can be read in terms of this notion of significant absence. This reference occurs after the narrative of the nymphs on the Thames and

the song of Mrs. Porter. In the first instance, the nymphs and their possible relation to the Philomela paradigm can be explored. The setting of the absent nymphs is described as follows:

Line 173 The river's tent is broken; the last fingers of leaf
 Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
 Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.

Like Philomela signifies in her mute absence, the nymphs are "departed" and as such the emptiness of their absence relates to Philomela's silencing. The "brokenness" of the Thames where "fingers of leaf / Clutch and sink" signifies to heighten the reader's awareness of the fragmentary, even as far as setting is concerned. Similarly, the setting and figure in *The blank cheque* is fragmented and broken, both absent and present, and the elements that are absent signify as much, if not more than, the ones that are present.

The Thames setting, furthermore, is described by absence:

Line 177 The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
 Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
 Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.

The river setting is therefore sketched by disclosing what is absent; the absent signifies in the place of what is present. What occurs here is semantic indirection - the text says one thing (absence) but signifies another (presence).

Adjacent to both the second Philomela reference and the Thames nymphs the reader finds the ballad of Mrs. Porter:

Line 199 O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
 And on her daughter
 They wash their feet in soda water.

By using the words and rhythm evoking the song, Eliot incorporates aspects of contemporary culture and banality into the poem. Mrs. Porter was a legendary brothel-keeper in Cairo and there are many songs about her sung by soldiers, and it is

not her feet that she washes (Hinchliffe, 1987:69). In this instance the mythical material of Philomela's "twit twit" and "jug jug", once decoded, becomes interwoven with fragments of a popular song. The reader therefore becomes aware of cracks that hinder first level decoding of Philomela's identity; between the nymphs and Mrs. Porter, there are gaps that need to be filled in by means of an awareness of the paradigmatic significance of the identity of Philomela. All these clusters of signification work together to create a network of semantic and thematic implications ultimately related to the construction of a female identity in the poem.

One has, however, to remain aware of the effect created by the convergence of dislocating elements that work on the second level of decoding. The fact that references are inserted into the texture of the poem is suggestive of collage in painting, where ready-made bits of commonplace and everyday elements infuse all the elements of the painting with meaning. Consider, for example, the collage structure of Mrs. Porter's ballad in the textual context analogously with Max Ernst's collage *Untitled* (figure 34). In Ernst's work the fragment of the cut-out image of a woman - printed on a piece of paper - is superimposed and juxtaposed with the image of a man fighting a serpent and what seems like a reference to Christophorus in the background. Evocative of the Biblical narrative of the Fall, this work deals with decay and has strong sexual undertones. Bits of existing trivia - such as the picture of the woman - are inserted into this artwork which also bears testimony to quite profound mythological and other implications. The sheer absurdity of images that are presented together result in semantic indirection that demands the simultaneous awareness of contradictory elements. One is also reminded of Riffaterre's statement that "a sign is only a relationship to something else" (1978:11). Therefore, once the viewer acknowledges the new contextual framework within which these disparate entities are presented, they begin to signify as components of the larger system of the painting.

This absurd mixing of images - bits of ready-made reality and mythical implications - echoes the insertion of the Mrs. Porter ballad into the mythical context of the poem and the resultant discontinuity and dislocation the reader/viewer experiences. Reader/viewer is therefore aware of cracks in the text of painting and poem that are caused by narrative and stylistic schisms. The unaltered states of the collage elements

in the poem and artwork evoke associations with the "real" but question the boundaries between the real and the fictionally constructed; it seems as if all becomes incorporated into the mental space where simultaneous coexistence of disparate elements assert themselves.

If one returns to the fluid persona of Philomela whose adjacency to Mrs. Porter has now been established, one could also make a case for reading her identity analogously with Salvador Dalí's *Soft construction with boiled beans: premonition of civil war* (figure 7). In this painting, which at first glance seems to adhere to the conventions of painterly realism, the gruesome transformation of human fragments into a constructed persona is suggested by the jarring together of limbs that seem to be perpetually metamorphosing. Ostensible textual cracks appear in the junction of human limbs, which impede first-level decoding of the painting. A repulsive head with anguished expression shoots up at the top of the construction, supported by a framework suggestive of human bones. Beneath the head a rotting hand clasps a female breast as if assaulting it or wanting nurture; to the right of this a decayed foot rests on human buttocks, which in turn are supported by another mutated, rotting foot. Next to the buttocks a torn bit of flesh in a phallic shape lies, skinned, in the harsh sunlight. On the ground, to the left, a rotten hand tries to clasp into the ground, behind which the tiny figure of a man stands. This figure serves to indicate the tremendous scale of the construction. The painting is at once repulsive and compelling because of the photographic detail in which the fragmented and mutating human limbs are portrayed. Cardinal (1994:16) suggests that Dalí's painterly approach of "hand-made photography" gives authority to "the most deranged and inadmissible visual proportions" insofar as this method suggests hallucinatory *trompe-l'oeil*. Each limb in the painting, by virtue of its tactile and visceral simulation of reality signifies by itself and the conglomeration of human aspects result in an awareness of brokenness, transmutation, rupture and riddle. The paradigmatic web of fragmentation and liquid identity holds together the frail construction.

Just like the violated Philomela transforms and mutates into a nightingale and into other images of women, where fragments of narratives and characters merge into one another to constitute a new and ever-changing identity, the human fragments in Dalí's painting seem to constantly modify themselves under the pressure of the construction. And while one is fascinated by "the change of Philomel" (line 99), one is also repulsed by the implications of violence and cannibalism - Philomela and her sister served her assailant's son to him as dinner - as one is repulsed by the implications of human mutation and decay in the painting.

In the discussion so far the fluidity of identity has emerged as one of the aspects in *The Waste Land* that coincide with many Surrealist artworks. It has been established that identities are not simple, neither are they presented in realistic or mimetic terms. Rather, they invite active reader/viewer participation and need to be constructed along clusters of signification, each fragment or allusive signifier contributing to one's understanding of each identity. Furthermore, identity is not a fixed notion, but constantly transforms under the pressure of contexts. Transcending temporal and spatial boundaries, aspects of identity fade in and out of perception; the real supported, informed and constructed by the fictional, and vice versa. This leads to the notion that identity needs to be viewed in terms of simultaneity: many aspects of a persona, place or object need to be apprehended at once, like the mythical and the vulgar, the temporally distant and the contemporaneous exist simultaneously. Identity is therefore a layered affair, and underneath each layer another, eminently meaningful aspect appears, signalling more and infinitely more possible "beyonds".

It would, of course, be impossible to indicate and assimilate into the present discussion all the instances in the poem where identity invites this kind of exploration. However, the exemplary passages with analogous references to Surrealist paintings could be representative of the general quality of identity as being in a state of flux and fusion as found in the poem and in Surrealist painting.

4.2 The theme of sexual decay

The second, briefer section of this analogous reading of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting is intended to illustrate the applicability of the methodological approach proposed in Chapter Three to thematic paradigms. This exemplary reading will draw on the motif of fluid identity, as well as the notions of simultaneity, fragmentation and the coexistence of the possible and the impossible, or the real and the fictionally constructed. The present aim is to explore this motif and notions further in the light of the theme of sexual decay and the lack of sustained meaningful relationships of love and sexuality found in the poem and a number of Surrealist paintings. This theme is often underscored by the use of setting, both in the poem and the paintings, and therefore this aspect will also receive some attention.

It can be argued that the theme under discussion builds on the multi-layered quality of identity. This notion can be compared with Magritte's painting *The importance of marvels* (figure 35) where layers peel off only to reveal something terribly significant underneath; but all the layers are comprehended simultaneously. Cracks between these layers suggest rupture, but as a whole the elements of the image present cohesion and coherence since the elements of the image are held together by the central theme or motif.

The Philomela story with its reference to rape and violation is emblematic of the general failure by personas in the poem to sustain meaningful (sexual) relationships based on love. However, Philomela is but one of the signifier signposts in the paradigmatic web that can be constructed around this theme. For example, one encounters a futile desire to establish meaningful interaction in the Hyacinth girl narrative:

Line 35 'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
 'They called me the hyacinth girl.'
 - Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
 Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
 Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
 Living nor dead, and I knew nothing
 Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

The inability of the protagonists in this passage to find fulfilment in their togetherness speaks clearly from this passage. The futile impossibility of their union is underscored by the intertextual references to *Tristan und Isolde* which literally frame the hyacinth girl narrative. It could be argued that the reference to the German drama begin to signify on the second level of decoding once "palimpsested" with the hyacinth girl narrative; the theme of unrequited love found in *Tristan und Isolde* forms a dialogue with the events in the hyacinth garden, ignoring boundaries of temporality and language. Hence the textual cracks that seem to appear between the German lines and the Hyacinth girl narrative are held together by a central thematic paradigm, which facilitates the reader's task of filling in the gaps left by the text.

Line 31 *Frisch weht der Wind*
 Der Heimat zu
 Mein Irisch Kind
 Wo weilest du?

And, directly after the hyacinth garden narrative, the following:

Line 42 *Oed' und leer das Meer.*

The intertextual references to *Tristan und Isolde* frame the hyacinth narrative in a language of separation, desolation and death (Spurr, 1987:162). These quotations furthermore function to establish an instance of morpho-syntactic fragmentation - their very placement around the Hyacinth girl cameo frames and informs one's reading of the passage. The paradigm of futile attempts to establish sustained love and togetherness therefore takes shape in the adjacency of lines that convey a central thematic concern. Of significance is that the theme of failed love found in *Tristan und Isolde* is not only underscored by the protagonist's inability to speak, but also by the presence of hyacinths, which are associated with mourning². Compare, for example, a similar thematic tenet found in Magritte's painting *The kiss* (figure 36). Here one

² Spurr (1987:162) refers to the story of Hyakintos, the beloved of Apollo. After the death of Hyakintos, the hyacinth flower sprang from the blood of her body. The hyacinth is therefore connected with grief and the loss of a loved one.

finds two people engaging in a caress, who are unable to reach each other through the cloth that cover and hide them. Sylvester (1990:27) argues that Magritte's use of hidden faces is part of the artist's consuming preoccupation with the hidden and can also be related to his association of death by water. The artist's mother drowned herself when he was very young, and she was discovered, seventeen days later, with her night-dress covering her head. The covers are therefore reminiscent of death in more than one way, and not only because they refer to the custom of covering the faces of the dead. The figures, it seems now, are neither living nor dead, and since they cannot see, the notion of not seeing is underscored - "my eyes failed, I was neither / Living nor dead" (lines 39-40). In a sense, this is also true of the hyacinth girl and her lover's inability to reach each other and the futility of their attempts to establish a meaningful union.

It seems as if the Hyacinth girl's suitor shies away from love, much like the earth in the opening lines of *The Waste Land* tries to hide itself from the effects of spring. Consider the following disheartening account of how the arrival of spring is experienced:

Line 1 April is the cruellest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.
 Winter kept us warm, covering
 Earth in forgetful snow.

Clearly, these lines suggest that the natural order of things is undermined, and that spring - the season of celebration - is a time of despair; that one would rather bury oneself in the oblivion of winter snow. This semantic crack indicates an instance of ambivalence which is supported by the absence of the natural celebration of spring. The reader is drawn to the implicit allusive evocation and inversion of a "ghost-text", in Riffaterre's terminology (1978:94), in this instance Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Within this context, the failure of love between the hyacinth girl and her suitor seems to come as no surprise; what is natural has been subverted and the desire to die has replaced the desire to live. This is anticipated from the epigraph to the poem, where the Sibyl, ancient and worn, expresses her desire to die.

Instances where the failure of sustained relationships is prevalent are scattered throughout the poem - notably the Thames nymphs and their departed lovers, the typist's encounter with the carbuncular young man, Mrs. Porter, Philomela, the Albert and Lil scene - all signifying the decay of sexuality and love.

The Thames nymphs are referred to in Part III - "The Fire Sermon":

Line 174 ... The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.

This is followed by unbearable melancholy in the next line:

Line 176 Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

A few lines down, the nymphs' partners are mentioned:

Line 180 And their friends, the loitering heirs of City directors;
 Departed, have left no addresses.

These lines attest not only to the physical absence of the parties, but also to the meaningless, short-lived relations between the nymphs and the “loitering heirs” who intended no further encounters by having left no addresses. The weeping protagonist in line 182 (“By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept”) seems to present a comment on the present situation from within the poem, and the tone of decay is set in line 185-6:

But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of bones, and a chuckle spread from ear to ear.³

3 The allusion here to Andrew Marvell's "To his coy mistress" is irresistibly suggestive - "But at my back I always hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near". It is not only the allusion to temporality that is suggestive, but also the thematic given of thwarted and unrequited sexuality and eventual decay that intrigues one and that makes a link to the visual works in this context. Marvell being a Metaphysical, and Eliot's line of descent from the Metaphysicals complete the equation.

This grim reminder of death and decay, associated also with the presence of the rat, serves to remind one also of the barren and waste context within which one reads the entire poem.

Shortly after the mention of the Thames nymphs, one encounters the song of Mrs. Porter, attesting to short-lived sexual relations and ridicule. This blends into the second reference to Philomela: now the nymphs in their absence add to the female identity set up around the persona of Philomela and bring with them rejection and loitering. The events that occur in the typist's apartment, as witnessed by Tiresias, follow shortly, adding to the theme of sexual decay also a sordid and banal tone - "a situation in which a man/woman named Tiresias spies on the bedroom antics of a pimple-faced clerk and his indifferent girlfriend is a burlesque, a scene from a cabaret show" (Sullivan, 1982:23). This, of course, does not mean that the implied humour negates the more serious, darker implications of the passage, but it certainly adds a perspective that borders on dementia and the absurd.

Underscored by the industrial setting, "the human engine waits / Like a taxi throbbing waiting" (lines 216-7), anticipating the indifference and mechanical nature characteristic of the typist's encounter with her lover. One thinks of Marcel Duchamp's *Bride* (figure 37), a painting that is a direct Surrealist precursor. In this painting the "bride" is constructed like a machine to be operated, devoid of humanity, functioning at the push of a button. Its parts bear little relation to the whole nor to a human being; it can only perform a mechanical procedure.

The mechanical nature of the couple's meeting and subsequent intercourse in the poem is startling - preceded by the typist's arrival home in her sordid apartment where she haphazardly lays out food while expecting her guest. He, the "young man carbuncular" is also referred to as "[o]ne of the low on whom assurance sits like a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire" (line 232). Her disinterest and his unattractiveness established, the passage proceeds to inform the reader that "she is bored and tired" (line 236) and he "engage[s] her in caresses / Which are still unproved, if undesired" (line 237). Assaulting "at once" (238) he continues to explore her with his hands,

"encounter[s] no defence" and her lack of responsiveness makes "a welcome of indifference" (line 243). Then, he "[b]estows one final patronising kiss / And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit" (247-8). She is "hardly aware of her departed lover", pondering for a moment: "[w]ell now that's done: and I'm glad it's over" (line 252).

In terms of the very mechanical nature of their interaction one could compare this passage with, for example, Max Ernst's *Elephant Celebes* (figure 23). Here a female figure, headless in her absence of identity, stands before an elephant constructed out of what seems to be parts of a vacuum cleaner. A phallic green construction rises out behind the woman. It is metallic in appearance and seems to have a mechanical erection emphasised in red. The female's gesture seems to signal either indifference, invitation or rejection; corresponding in nature to the haphazard response of the typist.

However, it is in Max Ernst's painting *Men shall know nothing of this* (figure 38) that the implications of mechanical human intercourse can be more fully explored analogously with the typist narrative in the poem. Presented in a matter-of-fact, neutrally realistic painterly style, it echoes the bland realism in the poem -

Line 226 On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
 Stockings, slippers, camisoles and stays.

The central image in the painting is a dismembered copulating couple suspended in space. Again, the narrative of the typist and her lover, which appears in the poem without first-level connection to their environment, is recalled. And, like Ernst's personas, who are only fragments of human beings, the implication in the typist passage is similar - neither the typist nor her lover develops into rounded characters; they are defined only in terms of their sexual encounter. The mechanical nature of the typist and her lover's intercourse finds a parallel in the painting - the couple seems to be mechanically restricted to their copulating movements by the strings that connect them to the tension point, which is a shape like a whistle, but phallic in appearance. Their human dismemberment is further underscored by the presence of human viscera in the foreground, which also signals the presence of death (compare these lines in

The Waste Land that follow the typist and her lover's intercourse; Tiresias says: "I who have sat by Thebes below the wall / And walked among the lowest of the dead" - lines 245-6). The presence of viscera in the painting thus strongly contributes to the paradigmatic theme of death and decay in this painting.

Wilson (1975:7) draws attention to the hand in the centre of Ernst's painting, stating that it echoes the modest gesture of the classical *Venus Pudica* (Modest Venus). This presence of antiquity embodied in the allusive signifier of the hand of Venus informs one's reading of the painting - the modest Venus is typically associated with love and beauty, two concepts ostensibly absent from Ernst's painting. In the passage from *The Waste Land* it is notable that the typist's encounter with her lover is presented in sonnet form, paradoxical in this sense because one usually associates it with rather lofty if besotted accounts of love and beauty. Also, the presence of Tiresias presents an analogy with the presence of Venus's hand in the painting. Responsible for shaping one's reading of the typist passage, the presence of Tiresias takes one to a waste land blighted with a curse; the implications of barrenness and decay are as present in this association as they are in the sterile void presented in the painting. Tiresias is also qualified by having knowledge. In the case of Oedipus, he knew about the incestuous relationship between Oedipus and Jocasta, but the paradox is such: Oedipus' doomed relationship with his mother reflected love; but the current situation - although not incestuous - is perhaps equally questionable in its disregard for humanity. Therefore, both in the painting and the passage from the poem, it is the reference to antiquity that informs the interpretative process of the contemporary event.

It was mentioned above that setting contributes to one's reading of theme in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting - for example, the vast, barren void of *Men shall know nothing of this* underscores the theme in the painting, while both the ugliness of the city and the Thebian wasteland associated with Tiresias perform a similar function in the typist passage. Particularly the use of desert imagery in the poem deserves some more exploration. The title of *The Waste Land* suggests a blighted land, and this notion is also underscored by the presence of the Fisher King and Tiresias, both of whom present associations of barren, cursed lands. When water is mentioned, it is

either in terms of death by water or reminiscent of transformation or sea-change or, like in Part V - "What the Thunder Said" in terms of the absence of water. Consider, for example, the hallucinatory:

Line 346

And no rock	If there were water
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 rock	
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees	
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop	
But there is no water[.]	

This passage seems to echo in intensity the barren landscape and the desire for relief brought about by water only found in Dalí's *The persistence of memory* (figure 3). Here the image of a humanoid figure constituted of facial features and viscera lies in the desert between life and death; the water in the background emerging like a mirage brought about by the projected desire and concretised in a hallucination. The naked landscape bears only a dead tree and melting watches; time transfixed, it could well be the heat of the desert that liquefied even the metal of the watches. But the desert is omnipresent in *The Waste Land*, from the "lamentous" "stony rubbish" in line 19 to Philomela's desert song and throughout the entire last part of the poem. Philomela's desert surroundings sensitises the reader to the role of the desert in the poem, and therefore the second reading of "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" (lines 19-20) is informed by her story. Desert assumes more than the threat of a barren land without water; it carries with it also the associations of deviant and ultimately futile human sexual behaviour. The Donnean "fear in a handful of dust" (line 30) in this context assumes more significance, and the horror of these desert associations replaces one's initial wonder at what could possibly be fearful about a handful of dust. Further associative connections with the handful of dust take the reader back to the Sibyl's desire to die, and this adds a stroke of fatality to the current situation.

In Surrealism, particularly Dalí and Tanguy are known for their portrayals of settings that evoke barren desert landscapes. These landscapes are typically also infused with horror - compare Tanguy's *Mama, Papa is wounded!* (figure 2) and Dalí's *The persistence of memory* and *Autumn Cannibalism* (figure 39). In this last painting one witnesses a gruesome scene: painted in a Quattrocentian style reminiscent of Botticelli, one can make out two figures - melting into one another - in an empty desert space; a house and farmyard suggested on the right. In this sterile setting one perceives an atrocious blending, melting and consuming - the figures, while embracing and fondling each other, are also devouring each another. The process of dream-like shattering and jamming together of images "silences the chattering of rationalism by means of bruising, scratching, or a violent display of mute appearances" (Hubert, 1984:581). This painting also suggests a frightful connection between consuming and sexuality, akin to the manner in which the typist and her lover use each other's bodies, and reminiscent of the violation of Philomela, who was raped and had her tongue cut out - and this was followed by the cannibalist avenge by offering the assailant's son to him to eat. In this regard the imagery of *The Waste Land* - rape, abortion, scattered bones, broken fingernails, toothless mouths, and severed tongues; a "heap of broken images" (Spurr, 1987:161) piled upon each other to interact and run its gruesome course suggests a structural and thematic link with Dalí's painting. The painting similarly displays a conglomeration of broken images with associations of violation and the severing of bodies. Mutilation and dismemberment, dislocation and evisceration - all these underscore the thematic concern for sexual decay found in the poem and the painting.

The disturbing connection between humans that both devour and desire each other, underscored by the wasteland behind them (both in the poem and the painting) is perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects of the theme of lack of coherent and meaningful relationships between human beings in these texts.

It has been established that inversions of normal grammatical usage and instances where the visual reality is undermined function in the poem and Surrealist paintings to construct meaning, and it seems that no matter how far the reader and viewer is lured

from ordinary usage of language and visual elements, one can still extract those aspects that communicate potently. In the words of Riffaterre:

It is a fact that no matter how strange a departure from usage a poem may seem to be, its deviant phraseology keeps its hold on the reader and appears not gratuitous but in fact strongly motivated; discourse seems to have its own imperative truth; the arbitrariness of language conventions seems to diminish as the text becomes more deviant and ungrammatical, rather than the other way around (1978:21).

This statement seems to summarise the effect that the qualities of dislocation, disparities and amalgamations of fragmentary layers of identities, themes and events have upon the reader and viewer of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting.

It has been suggested in this chapter that the method proposed in Chapter 3 can be used to investigate, for example, concepts (such as identity) and themes (such as sexual decay). These exemplary analyses therefore aimed at illustrating possible applications of the method and are intended to indicate how one can proceed from intuitive apprehension of analogous aspects in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting towards more sustained arguments.

CHAPTER 5: EN RÉSUMÉ

*I demand that he who still refuses, for instance, to see a horse
galloping on a tomato should be looked on as a cretin*

- André Breton

The first aim of this dissertation was to establish the methodological viability of analogising visual arts with poetry. It was indicated that there are a considerable number of contentious issues in this regard, notably the hegemonic position of the written word in the study of both poetry and painting. Nonetheless, it was established that the arts of a period share some inherent *Zeitgeist* which could inform analogous readings of all the artistic expressions of an age. It was also suggested that there might be a closer relationship “between poetry and painting than between painting and prose” (Sötemann, 1988:299). Perhaps the most illuminating aspect of this discussion is the claim that one could study poetry by studying art, which points to the notion that the simultaneous investigation of poetic and painterly expressions can potentially illuminate aspects of each art form, thereby overcoming certain generic limitations of the investigation of poetry and art. With regard to Modern poetry and Modern art, it emerged that in an attempt to transgress the generic and conventional boundaries of different art forms, certain poets have sought to engage with pictorial aspects in their poetry while some Modern artists, like the Surrealists, worked towards expanding possible narrative implications in their paintings.

It was further established that *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting could be contextually framed within the Modernist period. These texts also share some aspects of a similar *Zeitgeist*, notably present in the tendency that was identified within Modernism where certain artists took their cue from doubt and disillusionment, and endeavoured to find answers to the epistemological crisis of their age in the exploration of the psyche, the absurd and the intuitive. In artistic expressions this tendency within Modernism anxiously sought to explore the unknowable, the indeterminate and the elusive aspects of reality. *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting both seem to subscribe to these notions; rather than embracing fixture,

“truth” and formal logic, the poem and the paintings celebrate uncertainty, the logic of the imagination and intuitive apprehension of worlds beyond the surface of the text.

Having first established a workable contextual frame within which *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting can be located, it was then deemed necessary to investigate a range of critical texts that explored analogous readings of *The Waste Land* and Modern art. This was done in order to contextualise this study within the critical debate surrounding this issue, and also to determine a number of pertinent aspects regarding this kind of endeavour. In the first instance, it was necessary to determine which Modern art movements were selected by critics for analogous reading with the poem, in order to establish the qualities of these movements that rendered such analogies possible, and to examine the methods employed by these critics. Their arguments were then evaluated, particularly in terms of whether they remained bound to analysing technical and formal aspects in analogous readings of *The Waste Land* and Modern art, or whether they proceeded towards interpretation.

Cubism and Surrealism featured most prominently in these critical texts which sought Modern visual counterparts for *The Waste Land*. For example, Korg (1960) looked at length at similarities between Cubist painting and the poem, and also extended his discussion to include Cubist collage. His contribution also includes a number of provocative suggestions regarding an analogous reading of Surrealist painting and *The Waste Land*. Korg's assertion that analogies between *The Waste Land* and Modern painting *suggest themselves* (1960:456) is, to my mind, central to much of the critical debate that followed his ground-breaking article.

Hunt's (1974) contribution to this debate was the next one to be scrutinised. He investigated a vast range of aspects, including Eliot's early poetry from “Prufrock” to “Four Quartets” analogously with Cubism and Surrealism. This rather sprawling approach could be criticised for its lack of focus which may have resulted in a slightly superficial investigation. However, I would argue that Hunt's contribution is valuable in its rejection of some branches of traditional Eliot criticism which valiantly but pedantically endeavoured to paraphrase and “explain” Eliot's verse. Hunt places Wallace Stevens's claim that one could study poetry by studying painting in a central

position, and suggests that poetry and painting could be used to decode each other and illuminate possible interpretations that would otherwise remain unnoticed (1974:167).

Tomlinson's (1980) contribution, on the other hand, rather contentiously asserts that Eliot was tangibly influenced by Cubist painting when composing *The Waste Land*. He traces possible encounters Eliot might have had with Cubist art, suggesting that the poem owes its structural make-up to this artistic movement. However, this dissertation categorically rejects the notion that one can pinpoint exact intentional aspects of Eliot's poetry - rather, if one wants to analogise the poem with visual art, one should proceed by suggestion and look for similarities that emerge from *reading* the poem concurrently with visual images. Interpretation therefore remains bound to the reader's active engagement with the poem and possible visual counterparts; and it would be preposterous to suggest that a reader in the 1980's or 1990's can pretend to know what Eliot intended.

However, it remains my contention that possible analogies between the poem and Cubism are relatively limited in scope, because in order to arrive at a more profound exploration of the poem and the visual arts one would have to look for a movement such as Surrealism that depends, especially in its "magic realist" branch, on a large variety of recognisable images and devices. The very fact that Surrealist painting initially fools the eye with seemingly recognisable imagery means that this imagery is gateway to more profound realities beneath the surface, and similarly, *The Waste Land's* display of disrupted but often recognisable elements lends the poem its ambivalent quality which is suggestive of realities beyond the words and images.

It is, therefore, the contribution of Hargrove and Grootkerk (1995) that, in my opinion, establishes a useful avenue for engaging with *The Waste Land* and Modern art - and particularly, with Surrealism. Their argument is informed by Korg's statement that "*The Waste Land* is in some ways an unmistakably Surrealist poem" (1960:461). Hargrove and Grootkerk proceed to point out not only techniques, but also aspects pertaining to content and theme that emerged from an analogous reading of the poem and Surrealist painting. Here one finds perhaps the most significant reason for looking for Surrealist analogies to the poem rather than Cubist ones; because Cubism

was a style characterised by the apotheosis of form, often at the expense of more profound concerns with content. Poetic analogies with this movement, therefore, remain rather bound to explorations of formal elements and technique. However, Surrealism - with its conscious emphasis on content and thematic complexity constitutes a movement that allows one to explore more profound, and perhaps more meaningful analogies with *The Waste Land*. Like Surrealism, the poem exhibits a concern with content which is contained within a maelstrom of thematic complexity. Notwithstanding the emphasis on content, however, both the poem and Surrealist painting display a number of technical innovations and therefore Surrealist analogies with *The Waste Land* provide one with both technical and thematic avenues to explore, as well as a range of "meanings" or content. It seems, therefore, that in order to move beyond formal analysis towards more profound interpretations, Surrealism provides the necessary depth and complexity to render such analogies with *The Waste Land* viable:

Exploring this work [*The Waste Land*] in relation to Surrealist painting allows readers literally to "see" the poem in a different light and perhaps provocative context, thus providing a valid and meaningful way of experiencing the poem in addition to the more traditional avenues of literary criticism (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:17).

The simultaneous reading of the poem and Surrealist painting therefore expands interpretative possibilities and opens the way for a whole new range of explorations regarding technique, thematic issues and content.

Methodologically speaking, the readings of the four critical texts mentioned above indicated that suggestion and intuitive responses are highly regarded when analysing the poem with visual art. Intuition is a seminal aspect of this kind of study in order to establish preliminary possibilities with regard to analogous reading of the poem and visual artworks, and the initial readings in this dissertation, as presented in Chapter 1, are informed purely by intuition and subjectively apprehended parallels. However, in order to proceed beyond these initial responses, it seemed necessary to establish a methodological approach that would allow one to arrive at more scholarly analogous readings of *The Waste Land* and Modern art, and specifically Surrealism. It was

therefore suggested that a semiotic approach could provide a solution to this problem. Since semiotics is rather new to the discipline of art history, consideration was given to a number of critical texts that represent a concern for incorporating semiotics into the methodological apparatus of this discipline. From this discussion it emerged that semiotics, being an interdisciplinary mode of enquiry, could be suitable also to analyse and interpret the visual arts.

The methods offered by Riffaterre in *Semiotics of Poetry* (1978) and Johnson in "Broken images: Discursive fragmentation and paradigmatic integrity in the poetry of T.S. Eliot" (1985) were proposed as an approach that could facilitate an analogous semiotic reading of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. This method comprises a first and a second reading of a poem with a view to arriving at a measure of simultaneity - on the second reading, the reader apprehends the beginning of the poem with an awareness of what follows; he therefore reads the poem as a whole, "at once". This deems the method eminently suitable for reading poetry analogously with painting, where the viewer takes in the painting more or less at once.

Riffaterre's method emphasises that the reader of the poem picks up "ungrammaticalities" in the poem, and that these deviations from normal linguistic usage begin to signify, upon second reading, as components of a larger signifying structure. He mentions that this signifying process is informed by semantic indirection (where the poem says one thing but means another). Semantic indirection points to decoding possibilities in three ways: (1) displacement, where metaphor is concerned; (2) distortion, where one looks for ambivalence and incongruity; and (3) creating, where the textual space serves to suggest meaning that would not be possible outside of the poem, such as rhythm, rhyme and repetition.

Riffaterre's method also accounts for allusion and intertextual references, and it is stressed that the reader's literary competence allows him to recognise the evocations of other texts. Because *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting both frequently employ modes of semantic indirection as well as allusion and intertextual references, this method, one could assert, is eminently useful insofar as it accommodates these signifying processes.

Added to Riffaterre's principles of semiotic organisation, a number of salient concepts were investigated from a semiotic perspective in order to clarify the instruments needed to elucidate analogous readings of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. Fragmentation as a structuring principle in the poem and the paintings was discussed in the light of Johnson's (1985) suggestions. Here the notion of signifying clusters consisting of signifier signposts was discussed. These signifying clusters assume the quality of a paradigmatic web of signification, which is used to indicate that the textual cracks that appear in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting - in other words, instances where logic and narrative are disrupted - can be explained as an authorial strategy. This strategy of textual cracks bridged by paradigmatic awareness aims at impeding first level decoding and is indicative of the need to establish signifying structures beyond the surface of the texts. In other words, once a paradigmatic web is identified, the signifying process is informed by the identification of signifier signposts which constantly modifies and amplifies interpretation. Since Johnson's (1985) approach also stresses simultaneous awareness of different components of the signifying web and also accounts for the use of allusive and intertextual strategies, it constitutes a viable supplement for Riffaterre's (1978) model of semiotic interpretation.

Therefore, the signifying clusters in *The Waste Land* and Surrealism often comprise allusions and intertextual references which, in their fragmented form, function as strategies for disrupting narrative sequence and first-level linkage pointing towards a deeper structure of thematic and other signifying structures. The concepts allusion and intertextuality were elucidated to arrive at working definitions within the framework of the current study, and the similar function performed by collage elements in the poem and paintings was also discussed.

Once the methodological and terminological aspects had been amplified, an exemplary analysis and interpretation followed. This section, informed by the methodological and conceptual framework elucidated in the preceding chapters, aimed at illustrating a possible application of the method as a workable, fruitful one. The motif of identity as slippery, unfixed and simultaneous, as well as the theme of sexual

decay featured in this last section of the dissertation. It was established that semantic indirection functions rather similarly in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting, and that the textual cracks that inform this indirection can similarly be bridged if the idea of clusters of signification that constitute various paradigmatic webs is explored. Ultimately, while both *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting present the reader/viewer with aspects of the unknowable and the elusive, it is possible to analyse and interpret technical and thematic concerns as well as issues pertaining to meaning and content by using the proposed methodological framework. The concurrent reading of the texts according to the method facilitated a number of interpretative possibilities that would perhaps otherwise not have presented themselves.

It was an aim of this study to contribute to the current concern for interdisciplinary enquiry and more particularly to the analogous study of *The Waste Land* and Modern art. Therefore it is, in one sense, a continuation of the four critical perspectives discussed in Chapter 2 and mentioned above. However, apart from being a continuation, the current study also aspired to move beyond the conclusions drawn in these four texts by proposing a workable methodological approach for analogising particularly *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. I therefore aimed to show that a sound method could assist one in drawing more profound parallels between these texts, so that the intuitive apprehensions that one experiences at the onset of the investigation can gather some critical weight. While it was constantly acknowledged that intuition remains pertinent to this kind of endeavour, it was therefore attempted to substantiate these rather subjective associations and to work towards establishing a method that could account for analogies between two different artistic expressions.

The current study consequently differs from the approaches by Korg (1960), Tomlinson (1980) and Hunt (1974) in that Cubist analogies with *The Waste Land* are not regarded as satisfactory insofar as these can hardly proceed beyond technical and formal parallels. Therefore it is proposed that Surrealism in particular offers more numerous tangent points with *The Waste Land* than other Modern movements. This dissertation further asserts that a common *Zeitgeist* could inform many of the parallels found between the poem and Surrealism (in support of Korg, 1960 and Hargrove and

Grootkerk, 1995), rather than asserting, like Tomlinson, that a particular artistic style - in his case Cubism - had a definitive influence in shaping the poem.

The method proposed in Chapter 3 seems to be workable for interdisciplinary enquiry for texts such as *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. It would perhaps fall short for investigating analogies between more abstract styles that emphasise the formal and technical aspects of the artwork, because of the method's dependence on recognisable elements as well as the emphasis the method places on allusive and intertextual strategies. For example, if one wanted to compare a poem with Cubism, Vorticism or a similarly abstract style, the signification systems inherent in the method would possibly be ostensibly absent, and therefore another method would be more useful in such a case. It was stated in Chapter 3 that Riffaterre's method works best for "difficult" poetry - and is therefore suitable for a poem such as *The Waste Land*. This method would be less useful, for example, for poems that carry a straightforward political message or for paintings that depend purely on surface manipulations. Although, therefore, the method is not a solution to all interdisciplinary enquiry pertaining to poetry and art, it seems rather apt for investigating a particular kind of text.

With regard to the current *vogue* for interdisciplinarity, which aims to transcend and expand separate disciplines and to broaden the field of scholarly inquiry, one should perhaps take serious note of Linda Hutcheon's article "Disciplinary formation, faculty pleasures, and student risks" (1997, published in *ADE Bulletin*). She embraces the notion that interdisciplinary studies enrich a discipline's existing modes of investigation, but also cautions that interdisciplinarity should entail that one is well acquainted with the methods, subtleties and particularities of each discipline. In view of the fact that "some intellectual problems simply do not belong to a simple discipline" this kind of undertaking is a worthwhile pursuit; however, the pleasure derived from interdisciplinary studies could cloud the fact that proper grounding in a discipline remains pertinent to worthwhile academic endeavour (Hutcheon, 1997:22).

Avenues for further research at this stage can be postulated as follows:

The Waste Land and Surrealism could in a sense be regarded as having affinities with some tenets of Postmodernism. Spurr (1987:161) suggests that the metamorphosing subject in *The Waste Land* renders it a Postmodern poem, and Karl (1985:135) infers that cognitive slippage is associated with Surrealist painting - qualities inherent in Postmodern notions of eroded identities. The very fragmentary nature of consciousness prevalent in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting could also suggest possible Postmodern qualities:

[h]ow, I think we might ask at the end of the century and looking back on modernism, have the fragmentation and unity in the work of Eliot fared in the half-century since his major work was completed? Hardly dated, Eliot's fragmentation, it seems to me, has become one foundation for what we continue to call Postmodernism, and, in this sense, the Age of Eliot, far from exhausted, sustains an undiminished power (Lensing, 1996:469).

Karl (1985:402) states that the Postmodern sensibility demands that a text must be read as a "slippery, deceptive, unknowable narrative that never achieves stability or resolution." This statement seems to echo numerous qualities found in the current investigation into *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. In these text, like in many Postmodern ones, the slipperiness of meaning is achieved by the notion that one chain of signification leads to another, and that referentiality has a rather arbitrary nature; these are also Postmodern tendencies singled out by Karl (1985:402). *The Waste Land* and Surrealist paintings, furthermore, are texts that open up, allow free play, create indeterminacy, and emphasise anxiety, all aspects (once again stressed by Karl) that belong to the Postmodern arts. Karl (1985:403) suggests that Eliot's disruptive use of narrative sequence, character cohesion and scenic order is close to Derrida's notion of free play. The stress on reader response in Postmodern theory could further validate certain "Postmodern" qualities inherent in *The Waste Land* which demand active reader participation in the construction of the text. All of the above could also ring true of Surrealist painting. It would therefore be provocative to explore the notion that *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting could constitute "Postmodern" texts, or at least that they exhibit qualities typically associated with Postmodern art

and poetry. It could be illuminating to explore possible Postmodern notions present in *The Waste Land* analogously with Surrealist painting.

In the last instance, one of the most provocative common aspects found in *The Waste Land* and Surrealism is the prevalence of schizophrenia, hysteria, hallucinations and delusions. This suggests that one could explore whether there are similarities in terms of what one could call the "madness principle" in the poem and Surrealist art. In a provocative article entitled "*The Waste Land*: T.S. Eliot's and Ezra Pound's collaboration on Hysteria", Wayne Koestenbaum argues that Eliot's mental breakdown was a condition of the poem's composition, and that the resultant dream-like and hallucinatory nature of the poem validates an investigation of this kind. Furthermore, Louis A. Sass in his book *Madness and Modernism* emphasises the schizophrenic nature of the poem's fragmentary structure (1992:344). The same author refers to Surrealism in terms of "schizophrenic eccentricity" (1992:135). Also, one needs to bear in mind that Surrealism was directly influenced by Freud's exploration of unconscious processes of production and reception. An analogous exploration of the poem and Surrealist painting informed by a psychoanalytic approach could therefore, I would suggest, be an interesting and provocative project.