

## **REFLECTIVE FIELD OF T. S. ELIOT'S EARLY POETRY (METAPHYSICAL, ROMANTIC, SYMBOLIST AND IMAGIST POETRY)**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the English-language literary period from 1910 to 1930 (sometimes 1914–1964) is traditionally defined as “the era of Eliot”. Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965) is Anglo-American poet, playwright, literary theorist and critic, culturist, philosopher, Nobel Prize winner in literature (1948) for “outstanding innovative contribution to contemporary poetry”.

Eliot entered the history of literature and culture of the last century as a reformer of English-language poetry and literary criticism. Eliot’s authority in literature and literary criticism contributed to his lifetime recognition as classic. Moreover, Eliot’s theory of poetry has greatly influenced the development of particular directions in American “new criticism”.

As a moderate avant-garde artist, he was the neoclassical artist in literature (Eliot called himself the “neoclassicist”). Eliot’s poetic work has become an organic part of the neoclassicism of the last century, consciously oriented to tradition as a philosophical and aesthetically ideological phenomenon. It is the desire of the poet to comprehend the literary past, to renew it, enriched by other semantic nuances in his own metatext, to explain that Eliot was recognized as an elitist artist of the last century (K. Brooks, M. Tormelen, P. Sloan, J. Williamson, etc.). Eliot’s undoubted merit in the poetic art of the first half of the XX century is that he realized the literary process as a new cultural stage and was aware of urgency to preserve traditions in a complex and controversial avant-garde period.

For example, in the preface to the collection of the essay “The Sacred Wood” (1920), Eliot suggested not to regard literature as the closed system of literary works in its epic, but as a cultural and aesthetic value that belongs to all eras. It is the ability to rethink, using in his own works diverse material belonging to different cultural and historical stages, became the basis of his creative innovation.

In his work, Eliot not only satisfied the sense of tradition and strengthened the connection of the epochs, but also developed the poetics of linking, the basis of which was “the creation of new unities” (T. S. Eliot) and “the combination of the incompatible” (W. Scaff).

Eliot’s entire poetic work has been projected onto tradition as the dynamic unity of human culture.

## 1. The Reflection of Metaphysical Poets Tradition in Tomas Stearns Eliot Metatext

In his program article “The Metaphysical Poets”, T. S. Eliot emphasized “the ability to combine in an artistic way an intellectual and emotional beginning is an important feature of French Symbolism and true poetry in particular”. Eliot believed that French Symbolism was closer to ideal poetry (in Eliot’s sense it was Metaphysical poetry; due to Eliot this concept was established as a literary term) than the English-language literature of the turn of the century. In the aforementioned work, he wrote about such significant representatives of metaphysical school as John Donne, John Herbert and Andrew Marvell. In the first poetry collection, Eliot tried to imitate them. As the Swedish researcher M. Tormelen rightly states, Eliot’s main achievement is that he “created a new type of imaginative system”, in which the dominant role is assigned to the symbol – the connecting link between the past and the present<sup>1</sup>. Eliot’s imagery system with its inherent “combination of the incompatible” usually (and unreasonably) is compared to the images (“concepts”) of metaphysical poets. W. Skaff, in particular, argued that Eliot’s interest in the work of metaphysical poets driven by the search for a means to solve the task of “actualizing the human subconscious. From this point of view, the metaphysical “concept” is similar to the surrealist image, which is also characterized by a combination of the incompatible”<sup>2</sup>. Eliot was convinced that only metaphysical poets combined in their creativity both wisdom that envisioned intellectual thinking and religion. Eliot’s metaphysics is that he synthesizes both the intellectual (the prerogative of the next Baroque Enlightenment) and the sensual (the prerogative of the Romantic poets). Enlightenment meets the requirements of the intellectual, Romantics – sensual, and Metaphysics integrated in their philosophical world’s perception, both, to what, in fact, Eliot sought. Eliot did not only “resurrect” the names of Metaphysical poets (J. Donne, J. Herbert, R. Creso, E. Marvel, A. Cowley, J. Cleveland, etc.) for the culture of their generation. By the way, all Medievalists state not only the first half of the nineteenth century actualize the revival of the Baroque as a spiritual and aesthetic art direction of the late 16th – early 17th centuries), but also used quotations without attribution and graphic marking of their works in their own poetry.

I have *heard the mermaids singing*, each to each  
I do not think that they will sing to me (our italics – L.S.)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Thormahlen M. The Waste Land: A fragmentary wholeness. – Lund: Qleerup, 1978. – 248 p. P. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Skaff W. The philosophy of T. S. Eliot: From skepticism to surrealist poetic; 1909–1924. – Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania press. – IX. – 129 p.

<sup>3</sup> Eliot T. S. The Collected Poems 1909-1962. – USA. Florida, 1991. – 221 p.

Now let's turn to their prototype, namely, the 5th line of "Songs" by J. Donne:

Teach me *to hear Mermaides singing* <...> (our italics – L.S.)

Borrowing from Donne's "Song" in Eliot's poetry is a paraphrase, since, as we can see, it's semantic core is not broken. In the poetry of metaphysical poet, the lyrical hero convinces his friend that it is useless in the whole world to find at least one honest and devoted woman. The first stanza contains a recalculation of tasks that are equal in complexity: catching a falling star (goe, and catche a falling starre), conceive a child with mandrake (get with child a mandrake roote), find out where past years are (tell me, where all past years are) etc. and also hear the singing of mermaids (teach me to hear Mermaides singing)<sup>4</sup>. It is known that only Ulysses could hear the siren singing and be alive. Eliot's Prufrock becomes another contender for the role. I believe that the use of this paraphrase at the implicit level gives rise to irony, which is probably the author's intention. In this case, the interaction based on the principle of parody association. After all, Prufrock himself understands that singing mermaids do not sound right for him. The paraphrase of Donne actualizes two important motifs at once: women's treachery and the loss of love. In Donne's lyrics, the metaphor of "love kills" is dominant. "Love itself is a death" ("love is death") considered the poet. The image of the mermaid, like all water-related images, is erotic. They symbolize the release of hidden love impulses and desires. Prufrock is unable to make love, which is why he says: I do not think that they will sing to me. Let us follow another borrowing from Donne's relics. In "The Love Song" the tenth stanza begins with the lines:

I have known the arms already, known them all –  
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare  
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)<sup>5</sup>.

Mary Magdalene presented one of her lovers. In Donne's poetry it is the symbol of the reunion of the hero and his beloved in death.

I am now following what implicit meaning this paraphrase creates in Eliot's poetry. In Prufrock's mind, this image breaks down into components that warn him of the love that bears death on the one hand and is the beginning of all life on the other. It is in this context that we read the last lines of this stanza:

And how should I presume?  
And how should I begin?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Абакарова Н. М. Кто услышал "пение русалок", или метафизика любви: Д. Донн и Т. С. Элиот // *Мировая культура XVII-XVIII веков как метатекст: дискурсы, жанры, стили* // *Восьмые Лафонтеновские чтения. Серия "Symposium"*, Вып. 26. – С.-Петербург, 2002. – С. 121–124.

<sup>5</sup> Eliot T. S. *The Collected Poems 1909-1962*. – USA. Florida, 1991. – 221 p.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* P. 6.

Such semantic-images echoes of the two authors are conditioned by a common literary tradition encoded by universal symbols. Eliot searched for the present in the past, rightly believing that everything in it (the past) had already been said; it just needs to be rethought at a new historical stage and expressed in a new way.

Another precedent author in Eliot's poetry is metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell. In his critical writings Eliot emphasized that "the acquaintance becomes the stranger, and the unfamiliar – the acquaintance"<sup>7</sup>. Let us illustrate this with an example of the poetry "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock":

To have squeezed the universe into a ball,  
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,  
To say: I am Lazarus, come from the dead,  
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all <...><sup>8</sup>.

So this replica is a paraphrase, the prototype of which is the poetry line "To His Coy Mistress" ("His Shy Lover") by E. Marvell:

Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball<sup>9</sup>.

E. Marvell's lyric hero uses all his eloquence and power of persuasion to plead with a lover without hesitation to give in to love. Eliot's hero is the complete opposite. His own pathological shyness and self-doubt make Prufrock think that his "love affair" may be disturbed by the universe ("Disturb the universe"). As you can see, a worldwide catastrophe equated with Prufrock's internal rebellion. Thus, the indicated interaction based on deception reader's expectations.

Recreating the reality of Marvell's poetry in the context of his own work, Eliot reduces the sublime-romantic pathos of the latter. Changing the word "sweetness" to "universe", the poet not only delineates two poetic worlds: a world where a snowball flies at the feet of a loved one, with a world where the ball-universe can perish. Eliot's method of deceiving the reader's hope, based on the change of the primary phrase, not only demonstrates the true foundations of the hero's outlook, but also creates the effect of imaginative visibility of the poetry. Eliot has repeatedly emphasized that in order to return to the origins of the national tradition of English-language poetry, it is necessary to borrow the experience of not only French symbolists but also metaphysical poets. From Baroque poets Eliot borrowed technique of

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<sup>7</sup> Элиот Т. С. Избранное. Т. I-II. Религия, культура, литература. – М.: "Российская политическая энциклопедия" (РОССПЭН), 2004. – 752 с.

<sup>8</sup> Eliot T. S. The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950 / Ed. by Harcourt Brace & Company. – New York, San Diego, London, 1980. – 392 p. P. 6.

<sup>9</sup> The Oxford Book of English verse 1250-1900 / Ed. By A. Quiller – Couch. – Oxford, 1930. – 226 p.

contrasts and antithesis. Both semantic and formal contrasts are characteristic features of Eliot's poetics, which undoubtedly attests to his reflexivity about the Baroque style. Specifically, I should note that the semantic contrast is peculiar to many poetry, thanks to the texts introduced in the work, which are often quite the opposite at the implicit level. This contrast, in particular, is traced in the poetry of "The Love Song", "The Hollow Men", "The Waste Land", "Sweeney Erect", "Sweeney Egoist" and "Four Quartets". Eliot's metaphysical, in other words, is that he simultaneously incorporates intellectual and sensual, human wisdom, and unlimited freedom of will, reason, and religious dogma as the indisputable truth.

In addition, Eliot fully mastered the art (borrowed from the metaphysical poets) updating the entire wealth of values of certain words in different contexts. Such well-known features of Eliot's poetics as "a combination of incongruous", "assembling heterogeneous material", "game with the words" imitate the tradition, rooted by metaphysical poets. The use of tropes in Eliot's works is also quite close to the poetics of the Baroque. The metaphorical nature of his poetry is not ornamental, its nature is identical to the baroque metaphor (researchers define it as the dominant feature of this style). Famous Spanish theorist B. Gracian in his work "The Art of Worldly Wisdom" (1648) wrote that "the main task of the writer is to open connections between things and phenomena, not only harmonious but also disharmonious, the latter being the most essential and interesting to the arts"<sup>10</sup>. To illustrate this metaphor, let us recall the beginning of the second stanza of the poetry "Preludes":

The morning comes to consciousness  
Of faint stale smells beer  
From the saw dust trampled street  
With all its muddy feet that press  
To early coffee stands<sup>11</sup>.

## **2. Reflection of the Aesthetic and Poetics of Romantic, Symbolist and Imagist Poetry**

The aesthetics and poetics of French Symbolism had a significant influence on the formation of Eliot's poetic worldview. It was mainly through Eliot (here, of course, that his authority in literature and criticism played a role) that new, "French trends" merged with English-language poetry. For example, early works of the poet demonstrate the dynamic reflection of French

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<sup>10</sup> cit. for: Наливайко Д. С. Искусство: направления, течения, стили.– К.: Мистецтво, 1980. – 288 с. С. 131.

<sup>11</sup> Eliot T. S. The Collected Poems 1909-1962. – USA. Florida, 1991. – 221 p. P. 13.

symbolists, in particular, C. Baudelaire, J. Laforgue, T. Corbiere, in criticism – R. de Gourmon, in philosophy – H. Bergson and French neoclassicists – J. Bend, J. Riviera, S. Morras and others. In “The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism” (1933), Eliot confesses: “I was looking for poetry that would teach me to use my own voice and could not find it in English poetry, it was only in French”<sup>12</sup>. The influence of the symbolist’s experience in his poetry is quite prominent, especially in his early works (for example, in the poems “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock” and “Rhapsody on a Windy Night”). It is in the works of the first collection that, following the Symbolists, Eliot develops an urban theme and introduces poetry to modern life. About C. Baudelaire Eliot wrote: “Baudelaire developed a way of free poetic expression <...>, but not only by using the images of the wretched life of a big city, but by giving them images of striking power, showing them what they are, and together with that he found them deeper, meaning hidden beyond the surface”<sup>13</sup>. I believe that this characteristic could be fairly applied to Eliot himself. After all, its urban landscape is always a projection of the consciousness of a lyrical hero: for example, a winter or autumn evening (relevant to all works of the poet) invariably means the stagnation of the human spirit, and the sleepy life of the night streets – the actualization of impulses suppressed in the mind of lyrical heroes.

Eliot projects the depths of the hero’s state of mind (represented by the fragmentation of inner speech) into a gloomy urban landscape. For example, in the poetry “The Love Song” there are such lines:

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question<sup>14</sup>.

The complex mental state of the lyrical heroine in the poetry “Rhapsody of the Windy Night” also becomes more pronounced precisely due to its simultaneous projection on urban landscapes:

Along the reaches of the street <...>  
Every street lamp that I pass  
Beats like a fatalistic drum,  
And through the spaces of the dark

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<sup>12</sup> Элиот Т. С. Избранное. Т. I-II. Религия, культура, литература. – М.: «Российская политическая энциклопедия» (РОССПЭН), 2004. – 752 с. С. 290.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. P. 408.

<sup>14</sup> Eliot T. S. The Collected Poems 1909–1962. – USA. Florida, 1991. – 221 p. P. 16.

Midnight shakes the memory  
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Interestingly, the word “street” Eliot mentioned in the earliest poetry. For example, in “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” – 7 times, in “Preludes” – 5, in “Morning at the Window” – 2, “Aunt Helen” – 1 and in “The Boston Evening Transcript” – also 1 time, which confirms Eliot’s consistent actualization of the urban theme in his first collection “Prufrock and Other Observations” ( 1917). However, in the poem “The Waste Land” concrete urban realities has significantly made weak compared to poetry, “The Love Song”, “Prelude” and “Rhapsody on a windy night”. In it, the recipient perceives the urban realities intuitively as timeless, since poet presented them as text extensive system: ritual – myth – medieval knight romance novels – art of the Renaissance – baroque – sentimentalism – romanticism – symbolism.

In Jules Laforgue Eliot, by his own admission, took over the ability to prescind ironically from sublime romantic feelings and show his convention. To some extent, Eliot achieves this through semantic contrast, which the reader percept as a parody. The following lines of “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock” are illustrative of this:

Deferential, glad to be of use,  
Politic, cautious, and meticulous:  
Full of high sentences, but a bit obtuse;  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous –  
Almost, at times, the Fool<sup>15</sup>.

Analyzing this poetry, J. Williamson also draws a parallel between Prufrock and J. Laforgue’s “self-moking little man”<sup>16</sup>. A similar self-criticism of the lyrical hero sounds in “Portrait of a Lady”:

And I must borrow every changing shape  
To find expression... dance, dance  
Like a dancing bear,  
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape  
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance.

Thus, the internal conflict of the Eliot’s characters is completely arbitrary. It seems ironic that Eliot is not only lyrical. Laforgue’s self-irony is felt in every poetry of the first collection. This is justified, since the very name of the collection, “Prufrock and other Observations” implies certain observations on subjective and objective realities. However, these observations convey subjective feelings rather than social events. It is certainly

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<sup>15</sup> Eliot T. S. *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909–1950* / Ed. by Harcourt Brace & Company. – New York, San Diego, London, 1980. – 392 p. P. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Williamson G. *A Reader Guide to T. S. Eliot: a poem-by-poem analysis*. – 1 st Syracuse University Press, 1998. – 248 p. P. 16.

evident influence of Jean Laforgue, whom Eliot admired. This influence can be described as a way of hiding behind an ironic mask or posture, with mixed feelings and moods usually conveyed by dramatic means, in particular, self-irony (most evident in “The Love Song”) and ridiculously serious feelings, inadequate (often ambivalent) the discrepancy between the subjective impression and the reality of modern life. As for Eliot’s reflection on the poetics of J. Laforgue, of course, we cannot ignore his own confession: “Speaking of, say, Jules Laforgue, I must admit that he was the first to teach me to speak, who opened to me the poetic possibilities of my own manner. These early influences, so to speak, for the first time acquaint you with yourself, are due poetic impression, which, on the one hand, opens temperament, which is somewhat reminiscent of your own on the other – offers a form of expression that helps you find your own. There is no opposition here. Both are different sides of one influence”<sup>17</sup>. I believe that one of the dominant elements in the reflection of French Symbolism was the use of the French language resources by the poet. This is obviously shifting accents typical English style. First, Eliot transposes into English text French words and expressions, which are certainly perceived as text anomalies, for more examples see poems “The Love Song”, “Portrait of a Lady”, “Rhapsody on a Windy Night”, “The Waste Land”. Secondly, what is no less important – the use of French tracings. Overall XX century left many such cases, conscious or unconscious features that writers use from a foreign language (J. Joyce, E. Pound, E. Hemingway). This use of words in a foreign language can be interpreted as a stylistic device, which not only violate the usual literary form, but also create the effect of novelty and fraud of the reader’s expectations. Eliot actively exploited the opportunities that the poetry of French Symbolism opened to him, bringing the stylistic features of his early poetry closer to the Imagism ones. Although at that time, he was not yet familiar with either E. Pound or the concepts of this experimental school, whose representatives, as we know, in their texts guided by the Romanesque tradition. Oriental literature was also the object of their creative reflection. Imagists sought to overcome the conceptually abstract nature of the English poetic language and to give the word the utmost concreteness by creating tangible, visual images. Eliot’s early poetic works are characterized by visualization of poetic language, which certainly brings him closer to T. E. Hum, E. Pound, and R. Aldington. In his essay “Dante” (1929) Eliot wrote about the importance of using “visual language”. The line from “The Love Song” has already become a textbook example of the poet’s influence on the visual perception of the recipient:

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<sup>17</sup> Элиот Т. С. Избранное. Т. I-II. Религия, культура, литература. – М.: «Российская политическая энциклопедия» (РОССПЭН), 2004. – 752 с. С. 341.



I have measured out my life with coffee spoons.

It is through “visual language” that Eliot concentrates reality in a particular image and at the same time expresses a profound idea: the futility of life, which can be measured with teaspoons. In this case, the recipient visualizes a very specific unhappy person who is overwhelmed with painful awareness of the pitifulness of their existence. As you know, in the declaration of the imagists under number four was written: “To give an image” (hence the word “imagist”). We are not a painter’s school, but we do believe that poetry should convey the details accurately and do not be engaged in hazy abstractions <...>”<sup>18</sup>. Eliot adhered to this principle in his poetic works (there are many examples) and demanded his adherence from contemporaries, setting Dante as an example. Another significant feature of Eliot’s poetics brings him closer to the imagists: the combination in contrasting poetic expression of heterogeneous realities. In his essays in the 1920s, Eliot wrote that in the poet’s mind all the components of his experience “must form a new unity”, which is fixed in artistic form. “New unity” is actualized in Eliot’s works and at the linguistic level, we mean the demand of imagists to “use everyday colloquial”: “Use everyday spoken language, always use the exact word, not nearly precise or decorative”.

Eliot fills in texts (which, in fact, are not always perceived as a semantic anomaly), to distance the sublime style, usually borrowed material, from the spoken, the everyday. The prose of the lyric was not his or the artist’s discovery, because the constant quest for it is characteristic of great poets of different eras (A. Pop, J. G. Byron, John. F. Cooper et al.), so we can talk about tradition. Thus, the world literature knows many poems that successfully claim to become a novel (J. G. Byron, O. S. Pushkin, A. Mickiewicz). Eliot learned how to use conversational style in poetic language from the poet-romanticist W. Wordsworth, who, in the eighteenth century, opposed literary decoration, “describing everyday events in everyday language”<sup>19</sup>. Usually, Eliot achieves this effect (contrast of styles) by the ironic mismatch between the context from which the quote was removed and the new context where it was transplanted. This time of reception of the artwork, Eliot called “unity of perception”. That’s it, according to the poet, had the English metaphysical- poets. Eliot considered their main merit to have the ability to combine heterogeneous realities in the poetic phrase and thus create “new unities”. Among the contemporaries, according to Eliot-critic, the ability to create “new unities” had (except T. E. Hum and E. Pound) J. Joyce and J. Conrad. In the “Swinburne as poet”

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<sup>18</sup> cit. by: Джимбинов С. Б. Проблема герметизма в поэзии Т. С. Элиота // Писатель и жизнь. Сборник историко-литературных, теоретических и критических статей. – М.: Советский писатель, 1981. – С. 238–259.

<sup>19</sup> Warren C. T. S. Eliot on Shakespeare. Ann Arbor, – Michigan: UMI Research press, 1987. – 139 p. – P. 16.

(1920), Eliot wrote, “<...> the closest thing to us is the language that can unite and express new objects, new feelings, new aspects, such as for example, Mr. Joyce’s prose or the early Konrad”<sup>20</sup>. Eliot not only theoretically justifies its observation that, combining poetic phrase in heterogeneous phenomenon, a true writer finds new relationships between elements of reality, but also achieves a similar effect in their own creative quest. The poet, according to Eliot, departs from the traditional perception of reality and evaluates it as if from a new, unusual perspective, revealing previously invisible aspects. In the earlier poems, Eliot’s reflexive strategy is in the formative stages and is obviously oriented towards Romanticism. The reason for this passion, in my opinion, is that artistic, philosophical and aesthetic legacy of the metaphysical poets romantic poets perceived and interpreted differently. In the future, the metaphysical school was viewed solely through the prism of the aesthetics of this unrealistic direction, and “came” to metaphysics because of the passion for romantic poets.

For example, the central poems of the first collection “Prufrock and Other Observations”: “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock”, “Portrait of a Lady”, “Preludes” and “Rhapsody of the Windy Night” present elements of a romantic worldview through an internal monologue of lyrical heroes. The romantic text in these works becomes the object of poetic analysis, and not so much the text itself as the process of its creation, the mental mechanisms that govern it. The center of the early works is the traditional romantic scheme: a person potentially endowed with inner passion, opposed to the conventions of the world, which counterbalance her individuality, which, in the end, initiates the emergence of internal conflict. A true romantic hero is able to defy reality. However, in the poems “The Love Song” and “Portrait of a Lady”, he conquers the “world of external forms”. The lyrical hero of these poems is full of ambivalent contradictions. One internal impulse causes the subject to adapt to the conventions of the world, and the second – encourages action to implement their hidden desires.

The poetry of Alfred J. Prufrock’s Love Song exemplifies a similar pseudo-conflict, which is, in fact, already contained in the title of the work. The first part of the title “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” is a distinct attribute of romantic poetry, but there is some doubt about this affiliation because of the “unromantic” name of the hero: business card “J”. in combination with the pathetic “Alfred” (English name) and romantic poet Alfred Tennyson) deliberately goes down by the name “Prufrock” (which Eliot borrowed from a sign in a furniture store in St. Louis). The title of this poetry is

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<sup>20</sup> Элиот Т. С. Избранное. Т. I-II. Религия, культура, литература. – М.: «Российская политическая энциклопедия» (РОССПЭН), 2004. – 752 с. с. 341. – С. 717.

a rather eloquent example of “mounting heterogeneous material”, which initiates internal conflict from the very first, title words of the work. At the same time, the sheer irony of the conflicting fragments of the title in no way conveys the true content of the poetry. By its structure, the work imitates the weak struggle of these two beginnings in the mind of a lyrical hero. To illustrate, here are just the first lines of Prufrock’s internal monologue:

Let us go then, you and I  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table<sup>21</sup>.

The above fragment shows a very unusual for the English reader of the early XX century metaphor. Two realities that are inherently heterogeneous: evening and patient on the surgical table – in Eliot, they become holistic. At first, of course, this heterogeneous integrity is purely emotional. This is exactly how G. Ionkis interprets it, rightly seeing in it the author's intention to convey the “impression of mortality, the phantasmagoria of urban civilization”<sup>22</sup>.

It is logical to assume that the table is not only part of the entourage of the operating room, but above all cosmic infinity. Of course, this connection is associative. Plunging into the realm of her unconscious hero, Eliot draws a parallel between these images: the evening of a particular city plunges into a deep sleep, as does the entire universe.

Analyzed metaphor is a prime example of “a combination of incongruous” with vague associative bond. Prufrock exists in two parallel dimensions: the objective and the subjective world of his own thoughts, feelings, hopes and fears. Being of the lyrical hero is full of ambivalent contradictions: here is a volitional ambivalence (the lyrical hero constantly oscillates between two opposite decisions: and how should I presume? And how should I begin? Do I dare disturb the universe?; and intellectual (he expresses conflicting ideas): to have squeezed the universe into a ball / To roll it towards some overwhelming question; I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas and emotional: I am Lazarus, come from dead; I am no prophet – and here’s no great matter; I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be, / At times; indeed, almost ridiculous – Almost, at times, the Fool.

The emotional ambivalence is characteristic for the reader: a sense that the hero is lyrical, too polar – that respect and contempt simultaneously. In fact, ambivalent consciousness is a kind of way “mythological” irrational reconciliation mutually exclusive values and models, a kind of “magic” means to

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<sup>21</sup> Eliot T. S. *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950* / Ed. by Harcourt Brace & Company. – New York, San Diego, London, 1980. – 392 p.

<sup>22</sup> Ионкис Г. Э. *Английская поэзия XX века*. – М.: Высшая школа, 1980. – 198 с. – С. 88.

achieve psychological comfort in uncomfortable conditions. Poetry, beginning with a call to action, is actually a comprehension of this action, which the hero never dared. To some extent, in the works of Eliot in general and in the mentioned poetry in particular, the influence of A. Bergson was realized. His core thesis is: “The mental life of man consists of certain states that are constantly changing themselves and changing each other, passing into each other”.

This thesis was artfully conceived in Eliot’s work. A. Bergson described the phenomenon as a length that, in his opinion, is the essence of consciousness. The continuum, or therefore the length of consciousness, is adequate for Prufrock’s continuum of time. Awareness of the length of time gives rise to constant hesitation, which ultimately distracts Prufrock from the act. This internal conflict is experienced by the character of “Portrait of a Lady”. To recall a similar invitation to walk:

– Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance.

However, in Eliot’s early works, such depersonalization is more lyrical than dramatic, less objective than subjective. Following Donne and the French poets, Eliot, in his first poetry collection, gives an example of the mental activity of a lyrical hero, while neglecting external events. “A poet like Donne or, say, Baudelaire and Laforgue can be considered almost the inventor of a certain attitude to life, a system of worldview and ethical position”. What is important in my opinion is that the heroes of the first collection are not only characters of poems, they are also romantic poets. For example, the heroes of these works (in particular, Prufrock, who tries to compose his “Love song”) are deprived of a holistic vision of the world. Eliot demonstrates the practice of writing romantic works. At its core, as confirming “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrok” and “Portrait of a Lady”, dominates the internal negation of reality. In the minds of the characters not only external but also inner peace breaks into fragments. In the mind of romantic poets, as Eliot believed, feelings and thoughts are always divided. In his critical essays, Eliot noted that ordinary (everyday) feeling destroys the artistic structure. The phenomenon of “separation of thought from feeling”, which, in his view, sentimental and romantic poetry inherent, Eliot calls “decomposition of susceptibility”. In search of inner support, the romantic turns to his “I”, which makes the expression too impulsive, and therefore the creative process – chaotic. In this case, internal chaos cannot find an adequate external form of expression. It is in this situation Prufrock exclaims:

It is impossible to say what I mean!

I am formulated, sprawling on a pin

When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall <...><sup>23</sup>.

It should be noted that his own love song will not be sung, that is, the romantic work will remain unfinished, or rather, unwritten. Against this background, it is obvious that another conflict is actualizing: between the title of the poem and its text. Eliot's early poetry demonstrates the inevitability of distancing the reflecting author from his narrator, reproducing not only the latter's internal monologue, but also exposing the very structure of his thinking. In the early works of Eliot reflexive strategy, which is quite logical, is at the stage of formation. As you can see from the above periods, it was difficult to set up in the artist's "objection period". That is why the poet chose the tactics of writing works based on the synthesis of cultural and artistic systems. In view of this, Ionkis thinks of the "loosening of the old canons", which became the basis of his poetics, we consider not entirely adequate. A characteristic feature of Eliot's early works is the fragmentation that led to the loss of logical connections between episodes of the narrative. For example, "Prelude" consists of four parts; the first part includes two passages and the fourth part three. Prufrock's internal monologue also consists of numerous fragmentary memoirs and passages of thought. These fragments, as well as the fragments of "Portrait of a Lady", are, at first glance, quite self-sufficient, so it is not possible to establish an external connection between them. Everyone says this is not related to the previous one. Eliot thus demonstrates the actualization of a particular type of logic, which in the introduction to *S. Perse Anabasis*, he calls "the logic of imagination".

The "logic of the imagination" connects discrete fragments, revealing in them a single common beginning (the Absolute). The recipient perceives this connection not only mentally but also intuitively. Let us analyze a similar type of cohesion on the example of the poetry "The Love Song". After the introduction (the original author's metaphor), Eliot introduces an episode where women talk about Michelangelo, and then in the text the poet gives an urban picture describing the fog:

Oh, do not ask, what is it?  
Let us go and make our visit.  
In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo  
The yellow smoke that rubs its upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Eliot T. S. *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950* / Ed. by Harcourt Brace & Company. – New York, San Diego, London, 1980. – 392 p.

<sup>24</sup> Eliot T. S. *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950* / Ed. by Harcourt Brace & Company. – New York, San Diego, London, 1980. – 392 p.

At first, it seems that the mention of women in high society who hold secular conversations is not motivated in the midst of a metaphorical landscape. After all, this episode (unfolded only in two poetic lines) has neither logical nor associative links with the previous and next lines. The intention of the author becomes clear in the “philosophical” view of the analyzed stanza. Obviously, the poet intended to show the two sides of the real world. The first is the reality of the conventions of social life; the second is Prufrock’s sphere of sensuality.

Both realities are combined in the mind of the hero. At the same time, the fragility of fragments is removed due to their internal connection, the so-called “logic of imagination”. The fragmentation of early poetry, updated by the absence of internal logical connections and the usual temporal sequence, indicates that these works are more spatial than temporal. This fragmentation is much actualized in the later poems of Eliot, and it will reach the greatest concentration in the “The Waste Land”. The problem of material unity is not limited to the scope of one work. Of course, unity and integrity, in Eliot’s understanding, can only be realized when familiar with all the writer’s work.

An important role in the compositional organization of the work is played by a system of leitmotifs, which combines all the fragments in a single period, compensating for their external rupture. E. Meletinsky called the leitmotifs “a compositional mechanism that realizes the psychological superstructure of works and brings together individual facts, accidental associations, etc., turning the bridge from the naturalistic facts to their sometimes arbitrary “symbolic” and especially psychological significance”<sup>25</sup>. For poetry, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” an important leitmotif is the image of mist. Prufrock’s rhetorical questions are also leitmotifs: Do I dare?, “How should I presume?”, and the biblical allusion to “There will be time”. Two situations are repeated in this poetry, which also serve as leitmotif: “In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo” and “That is not at all / That is not what I meant, at all”. The system of leitmotifs in the poetry “Portrait of a Lady” is much less developed. The central leitmotif is the word “friend”, which is repeated in this poetry 7 times, as well as two phrases: “Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance” and “I shall sit here serving tea for friend”. In poetry “Rhapsody of a Windy Night” word “twist” serves as a leitmotif and repeated 4 times, and the phrase “dead geranium”, which is used in the text twice. Characteristic for Eliot’s metatext is a metapoetic system of leitmotifs. One of the centerpieces in “Prelude” is the image of the mist: “The burnt out ends of smoky days”, which plays an important meaning-making function in “The Love Song”: “the yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes”.

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<sup>25</sup> Мелетинский Е. М. Поэтика мифа. – М.: Наука, 1976. – 408 с.

In poetry, "Portrait of a Lady", this image appears as a kind of leitmotif: the first line – "Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon // You have the scene arrange itself – as the last line – "with a smoke coming down the housetops". The image of the mist Eliot introduces in the first line of the second stanza of the poetry "Morning by the Window": "The brown waves of fog toss up to me". In the poetry "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar", Eliot introduces this image in the line "The smoky candle end of time" and finally in "The Waste Land" – "the brown fog of winter dawn".

The numerical variability of the use of the image of mist in the early period of creativity gives grounds to speak about the ambiguous symbolism of this image in the metatext of the author. I tend to think that Eliot created it as a kind of "border zone" between the outside and the inner world, between the subjective and the objective. It is likely that the fog in the author's metatext symbolizes the ghostliness of human being and is the epitome of the pernicious world of illusions that so disturbed the poet. I consider all of these variant repetitions to be a striking manifestation of auto-intertextuality, which establishes semantic links within both the individual work and all of Eliot's metatext. Similar is Eliot's motivation for the repeated use of the image of the shadow in the poetry of periods of "search" and "Catholicism". For example, in the poetry of "Sweeney Erect" this image is represented in the lines: "The lengthened shadow of a man / Is history said Emerson". In the poetry of "The Hollow Men", Eliot makes a very interesting combination, in our view: the author updates the image of the shadow (in capital letters) among biblical allusions three times. This image is cross-sectional in the fifth part of the work: the second stanza is "Between the motion / And the act / Falls shadow / For Thine is the Kingdom"; third stanza – "Between the emotion / And the response / Falls the Shadow / Life is very long"; fourth stanza – "Between the essence / And the descent / Falls the Shadow / For Thine is the Kingdom". This image of researchers of Eliot's creativity evokes many different variants of interpretation. In particular, G. Smith believes that the image of Shadow in poetry is associated with the spiritual impotence of Prufrock, who is unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality. Eliot introduces this image into the center of opposition: idea / reality, motion / act (stanza II), conception / creation, emotion / response (stanza III), desire / spasm, potency / existence, essence / descent (stanza IV).

The first opposition, according to G. Smith, means sex, the second – sex and creation, the third – sex, creation and salvation<sup>26</sup>. All the inner impulses of the lyrical hero are suppressed by the appearance of Shadow. However, if we

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<sup>26</sup> Smith G. T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning. Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1974. – 358 p.

agree with this view, we can conclude that Eliot in his own metatext only wrote Prufrock's image. I think such an assumption is completely illogical: first, "The Love Song" and "The Hollow Man" are written in different periods of Eliot's creative and spiritual growth as a poet-philosopher and personality. To recognize the thought of G. Smith means to refuse Eliot a spiritual and creative evolution. In my opinion, the Shadow is rather an allusion to the shadow of Master Dante – Brunetto Latini, whom he met in Hell. Eliot himself confessed that the prototype of this image was a poem by Ernest Dawson, with the following lines: "There fell thy shadow" and "Then falls the shadow". "Tormenting shadows" is also found in J. Conrad's novel "Heart of Darkness", 1902. It is interesting to note that the epigraph to "The man" was also used by Eliot from this work: "Mistah Kurts – he dead"<sup>27</sup>. The phrase "the valley of shadow of death" is found in Psalm 23.

The likelihood of this prototype can be motivated by Eliot's deep interest in religion as part of his philosophical and poetic quest. In addition, the image of Shadow is cross-cutting in the poem "Waste Land". The first part of "The Burial of the Dead" has a small snippet, with the actualization of this image in each line: Only / There is shadow under this red rock, / show you something different from either / Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your shadow at evening striding to meet you.

In Eliot's early lyric the system of repetition was examined and systematized in detail by many scholars of his creative heritage. It has been found that the leitmotifs in the text perform a structuring function by linking different contexts. In addition, frequent repetition refines the word or image, identifying new associations in a new context. Therefore, we can talk about axiological, characteristic and interpretive functions. Eliot, as G. Ionkis rightly points out, developed the principle of "intensification" of the energy of the word.

"He demanded, the researcher writes, not a musical instrument, but a semantic instrument of poetry. He soon mastered the art that so fascinated him in "metaphysics" – the art of extracting from the word, squeezing and compressing it in different contexts, a meaning that we did not even suspect"<sup>28</sup>. I believe that these repetitions in Eliot's early poetry are the manifestation of autointertextuality, which is why they potentially reveal dialogic relationships in the author's metatext system. Based on the analysis, we can talk about the multifunctionality of interaction. I have classified all identified features as follows:

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<sup>27</sup> Статкевич Л. П. Комеморат та міжтекстові алюзії: проблема амбівалентного співіснування у поемі Т. С. Еліота "The Hollow Men" // Мова і культура. – К.: Видавничий Дім Дмитра Бурого, 2004. – Вип. 7. – Т. IV. Ч. 2. Лінгвокультурологічна інтерпретація тексту. – С. 259–264.

<sup>28</sup> Ионкис Г. Э. Английская поэзия XX века. – М.: Высшая школа, 1980. – 198 с. – С. 95.



1) cultural-semiotic group includes cultural-semiotic function (the text certifies the author's artistic preferences), appeal, communicative, game, signal-mnemonic (the function of recognition and mention of prototype);

2) content-transformation group includes transformational, characteristic (or imagological, when new images are created on the basis of the text), interpretative, semantic-generating, axiological, strategic and stylization function.

3) structural-narrative group includes structure-forming and motive functions.

Reflective strategy is fundamentally different in the works of the second poetic collection. The culmination will be "The Waste Land" – a kaleidoscope of numerous poetic practices. However, in the poem "Ash Wednesday", one can clearly trace Eliot's attempt to overcome the reflexive method, to synthesize personal style. Another feature of the poetics of Eliot's early works is the inclusion of quotations (usually unattributed) and images from other literary sources, as well as the active use of literary and historical reminiscences. The borrowing technique, which is recorded by the eliotologists in the poetry of the first collection, will become noticeably more complicated in the future, from a formal point of view,

In early works, it is still only being formed and is therefore an auxiliary means of modeling artistic reality. Eliot's fragmentary poetry in linguistic and stylistic terms is homogeneous, since all the forms of intertextuality present in the text are organically interwoven into the fabric of the text. As a rule, Eliot does not label them, so they do not dissonate with the general narrative, unlike the texts in later works, in particular, in the poems "The Waste Land" and "Four Quartets", which, through the texts, form separate levels of narrative. The poet's early works are a synthesis of metaphysical, romantic symbolist and imaginative poetry. Literary reflection in later periods of his work has resulted in an intertextual strategy, the dominant principle of Eliot's poetics.

Eliot himself understood any literary "influence" not as subordination to the authority or creative manner of another author, but as a sovereign and productive encounter with the spiritual world of poets and philosophers, as a fruitful discussion with their ideals, images, verbal formulas, mental paradigms. The texts of other authors were only points of support and orientation for Eliot, who had his own ideas and life experiences, and only in this way he could transform borrowed into his own.

Thus, literary and aesthetic reflection in the work of Eliot is a dynamic phenomenon. Logically enough, it is transformed into intertextuality – the dominant feature of his poetics. Based on the analysis of the poetry of the early collections, the functions of the Eliot interaction can be classified. Explicit

interaction enriches the work with additional and unexpected meanings, and “alien word” – with powerful energy.

The poet thus strengthens the connection of the times and enriches the national cosmopolitan culture by the variant images of the world. By engaging in dialogue with his predecessors, usually the classics who form the poetic canon he created, Eliot preserves and develops a cultural tradition that, in his view, was an important task of the poet.

### **SUMMARY**

This article deals with synthesis and reflection of literary tradition in Eliot’s early poetry. This is due to his desire to update the literary past, enrich it with new semantic nuances, to comprehend in his own metatext, and repeatedly declared in cultural essays the requirements for writers: to strengthen the connection of the times, to preserve and develop the tradition and to create elitist art. His early poetry is a philosophical-poetic synthesis of Metaphysical, Romantic, Symbolist and Imagism poetry. Therefore, they were the most active objects of the theoretical and poetic reflection.

The reflection of the poets of the metaphysical school in the work of Eliot manifested itself in the fact that he simultaneously synthesized the intellectual (the prerogative of the subsequent Baroque Enlightenment) and the sensual (the prerogative of the Romantic poets). Eliot borrowed from the metaphysical-poets the art of actualizing the entire wealth of meanings of a word in different contexts. Such well known attributes of Eliot’s poetics as “the combination of the incompatible”, “the assembly of heterogeneous material”, and “the play with the meanings of the word” are an inheritance of the tradition started by the metaphysical-poets. The use of tropes in Eliot’s poems is also quite close to the poetics of the Baroque. The metaphorical nature of his poetry is not ornamental; its nature is identical to the metaphor of the Baroque.

In the poems of the first collection, “Prufrock and Other Observations”, the elements of the romantic world are presented through an internal monologue of lyrical heroes. The object of poetic reflection is the romantic text and the process of its creation, the mental mechanisms that govern it. At the heart of Eliot’s earliest poems is a traditional romantic scheme: a person potentially endowed with inner passion resists the conventions of a world that seeks to counterbalance its individuality, which ultimately causes internal conflict. The result of such conflict is willful, intellectual and emotional ambivalence.

The reflection of the best representatives of French symbolism actualized an urbanistic theme in Eliot’s early work. The result of this reflection is the use of words and expressions in French. Confirmation of consistent updating by the

poet of the urban theme is that the poet gives a description of the terrain against the background of the mental state of the hero, weaving them together.

Eliot's early poems are characterized by the visualization of poetic language and the use in the poetic text of the everyday language, which brings it closer to the Imagism. Such a reception is motivated by the desire of the poet to emphasize the grandeur and refinement of the language and style of previous epochs, exposing the gulf between them and the present.

The poetry of the early collections is fragmentary in formal and semantic terms. The discreteness of fragments is removed by the "logic of imagination" and the establishment of associative parallels, which always in the works perform not only a communicative but also a clearly expressed sense-generating function. A clear system of leitmotifs in these works to some extent contributes to the formation of compositional unity. The function of leitmotifs in the analyzed poetry is performed by words, phrases and images. By linking different contexts, they discover new associations and create deep implicit meanings.

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