
NOTES

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Macmillan). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*; I have used especially the two volumes Adonis, Attis, Osiris.

Anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognize in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies.

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD


31. V. Tristan und Isolde, i, verses 5–8.

42. Id. iii, verse 24.

46. I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the 'crowds of people', and Death by Water is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

60. Cf. Baudelaire:

Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.

63. Cf. Inferno, iii, 55–7:

si lunga tratta
di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto
che morte tanta n'avessi disfatta.

64. Cf. Inferno, iv, 25–27:

Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,
non avea pianto, ma' che di sospiri,
che l'aura eterna facevan tremare.

68. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

74. Cf. the Dirge in Webster's White Devil.

76. V. Baudelaire, Preface to Fleurs du Mal.

II. A GAME OF CHESS

77. Cf. Antony and Cleopatra, II. ii. 190.

92. Laquearia. V. Aeneid, I. 726:

dependent lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.

98. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, Paradise Lost, iv. 140.

99. V. Ovid, Metamorphoses, vi, Philomela.
100. Cf. Part III, l. 204.


118. Cf. Webster: 'Is the wind in that door still?'


III. THE FIRE SERMON

176. V. Spenser, Prothalamion.

192. Cf. The Tempest, I. ii.

196. Cf. Marvell, To His Coy Mistress.

197. Cf. Day, Parliament of Bees:
   When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear,
   A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring
   Actaeon to Diana in the spring,
   Where all shall see her naked skin...

199. I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.

202. V. Verlaine, Parsifal.

210. The currants were quoted at a price 'carriage and insurance free to London'; and the Bill of Lading, etc., were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft.

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. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem. The whole passage from Ovid is of great anthropological interest:

   ...Cum Iunone iocos et 'maior vestra profecto est
   Quam, quae contingit maribus', dixisse, 'voluptas.'
   Illa negat; placuit quae sit sententia docti
   Quaerere Tiresiae: venus huic erat utraque nota.
   Nam duo magnorum viridi coeuntia Silva
   Corpora serpentum baculi violaverat Ictu
   Deque viro factus, mirabile, femina septem
   Egerat autumnos; octavo rursus eosdem
   Vidit et 'est vestrae si tanta potentia plagae',
   Dixit 'ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,
   Nunc quoque vos feriam!' percussis anguibus isdem
   Forma prior redit genetivaque venit imago.
   Arbor hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa
   Dicta Iovis firmat; gravius Saturnia iusto
   Nec pro materia fertur doluisse suique
   Judicis aeterna damnavit lumina nocte,
   At pater omnipotens (neque enim licet irita cuiquam
   Facta dei facisse deo) pro lumine adempto
   Scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore.

221. This may not appear as exact as Sappho's lines, but I had in mind the 'longshore' or 'dory' fisherman, who returns at nightfall.
253. V. Goldsmith, the song in The Vicar of Wakefield.

257. V. The Tempest, as above.

264. The interior of St. Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren's interiors. See The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.).

266. The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here. From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn. V. Götterdämmerung, III: i: The Rhine-daughters.

279. V. Froude, Elizabeth, vol. I, ch. iv, letter of De Quadra to Philip of Spain:
In the afternoon we were in a barge, watching the games on the river. (The queen) was alone with Lord Robert and myself on the poop, when they began to talk nonsense, and went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the queen pleased.


309. From St. Augustine's Confessions again. The collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident.

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

In the first part of Part V three themes are employed: the journey to Emmaus, the approach to the Chapel Perilous (see Miss Weston's book), and the present decay of eastern Europe.

357. This is Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec County. Chapman says (Handbook of Birds in Eastern North America) 'It is most at home in secluded woodland and thickety retreats.... Its notes are not remarkable for variety or volume, but in purity and sweetness of tone and exquisite modulation they are unequalled.' Its 'water-dripping song' is justly celebrated.

360. 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.

367–77. Cf. Hermann Hesse, Blick ins Chaos:

401. 'Datta, dayadhvam, damyata' (Give, sympathize, control). The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the Brihadaranyaka--Upanishad, 5, 1. A translation is found in Deussen's Sechzig Upanishads des Veda, p. 489.
407. Cf. Webster, The White Devil, V, vi:
...they'll remarry
Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.

411. Cf. Inferno, xxxiii. 46:
ed io sentii chiavar l'uscio di sotto
all'orribile torre.
Also F. H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 346:
My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or
my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle
closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to
the others which surround it.... In brief, regarded as an existence which appears
in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.

424. V. Weston, From Ritual to Romance; chapter on the Fisher King.

427. V. Purgatorio, xxvi. 148.
'Ara vos prec per aquella valor
'que vos guida al som de l'escalina,
'sovegna vos a tems de ma dolor.'
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina.

428. V. Pervigilium Veneris. Cf. Philomela in Parts II and III.

429. V. Gerard de Nerval, Sonnet El Desdichado.

431. V. Kyd's Spanish Tragedy.

433. Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The Peace which passeth understanding' is a
feeble translation of the conduct of this word.