



The Waste Land
(part 2)

The Desolation of the Land

1. What are the *roots that clutch*, what branches grow
2. Out of this *stony rubbish*? Son of man,
3. You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
4. *A heap of broken images*, where the sun beats,
5. And the *dead tree* gives **NO** shelter, the cricket **NO** relief,
6. And the *dry stone* **NO** sound of water. Only
7. There is shadow under this red rock,
8. (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
9. And I will show you something different from either
10. Your shadow at morning striding behind you
11. Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
12. I will show you *fear in a handful of dust*.

- Agonized world filled with stony rubbish
- The sun beats mercilessly
- The dead trees give no shelter
- The cricket's cry no relief
- Dry stones and no sound of water

Despite the prophetic tone Tiresias is not allowed to see: «son of a man, you cannot say or guess» (Old Testament, Book of Ezekiel)

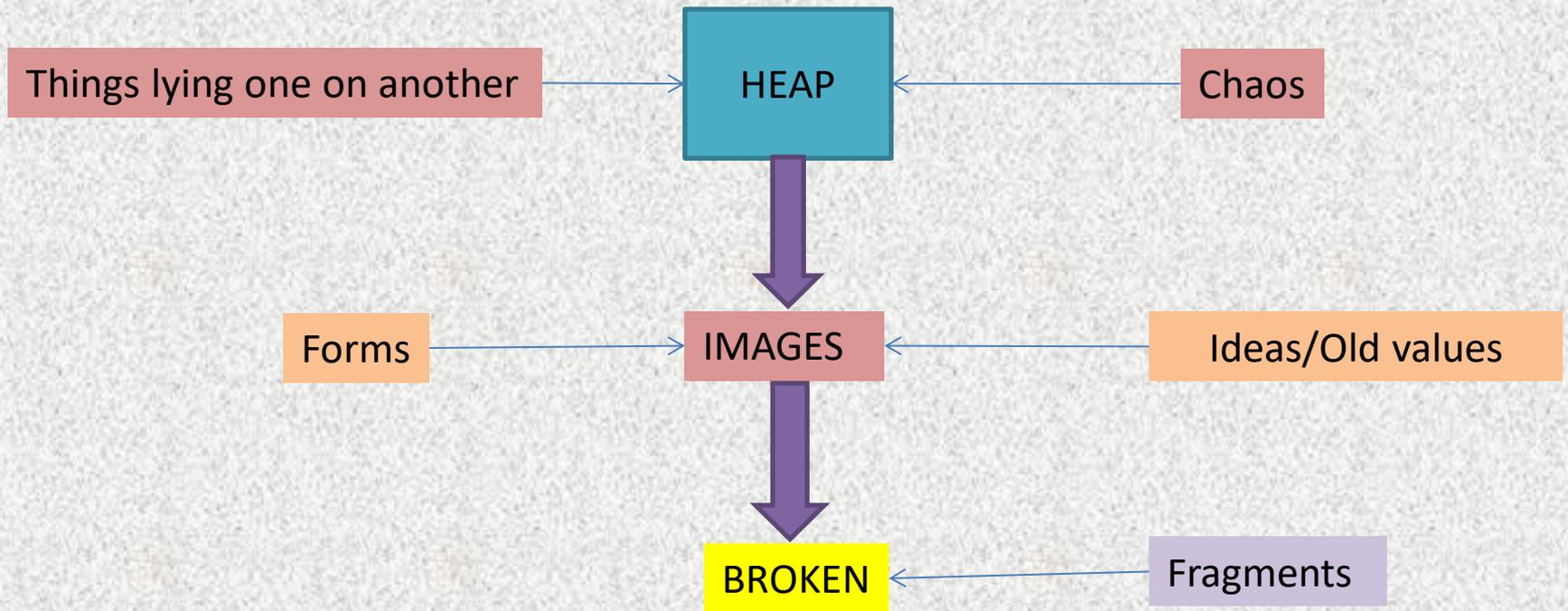
Modern day has lost his connection to God.

There is no way of sticking the images together into a new whole for absence of values and prospects.

The land reflects man's psychological sickness. The land is sick and barren just like men are sick and barren.

The line a brings to mind the Christian admonition to man of his bodily mortality: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shall return."

A Heap of Broken Images



Hence

The present appears chaotic and meaningless as only scattered pieces of a whole, which was the past, have remained. Sense of loss.

A silhouette of a person sitting on the ground, leaning forward with their head buried in their hands, suggesting deep distress or despair. The background is a bright, hazy sunset over a body of water, with tall grasses in the foreground. The overall mood is one of melancholy and hopelessness.

**What becomes of love
In the Waste Land?**

The Hyacinths Girl

Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?

“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**

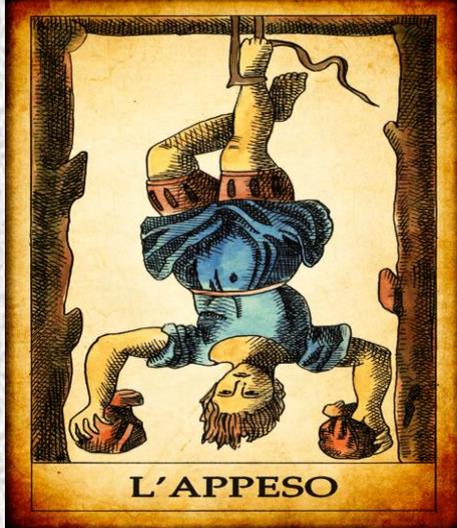
Living **nor** dead, and I knew **nothing**,
Looking into the heart of light, the **silence**.

Oed' und leer das Meer.

- *The German in the middle is from Tristan and Isolde, and it concerns the nature of love – love, like life, is something given by God, and humankind should appreciate it because it so very easily disappears.*
- *Hyacinths (like lylacs) were flowers of grief and mourning*
- *Hyacinthus was a handsome young Spartan prince loved by the gods Apollon and Zephyros. The West-Wind, however, grew jealous of his rival in love and one day, kills him in the head.*
- *The grieving Apollon then transformed the dying youth into a flower (hyakinthos in Greek)*
- *The stanza ends with another quote from Tristan and Isolde : ‘empty and desolate the sea’. Hence there is no room for love in the Waste Land. Time and death corrupt the very essence of love.*

What Will the Future be Like?





Madame Sosostris

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante, Had a bad cold, nevertheless

Is known to be **the wisest woman in Europe**, With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor, (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!) Here is Belladonna, The Lady of the Rocks, The lady of situations.

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,

And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card, Which is **blank**, is something he carries on his back, Which **I am forbidden to see**. I do **not** find The **Hanged Man**. Fear death by water. I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.

Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone, Tell her I bring the horoscope myself: One must be so careful these days.

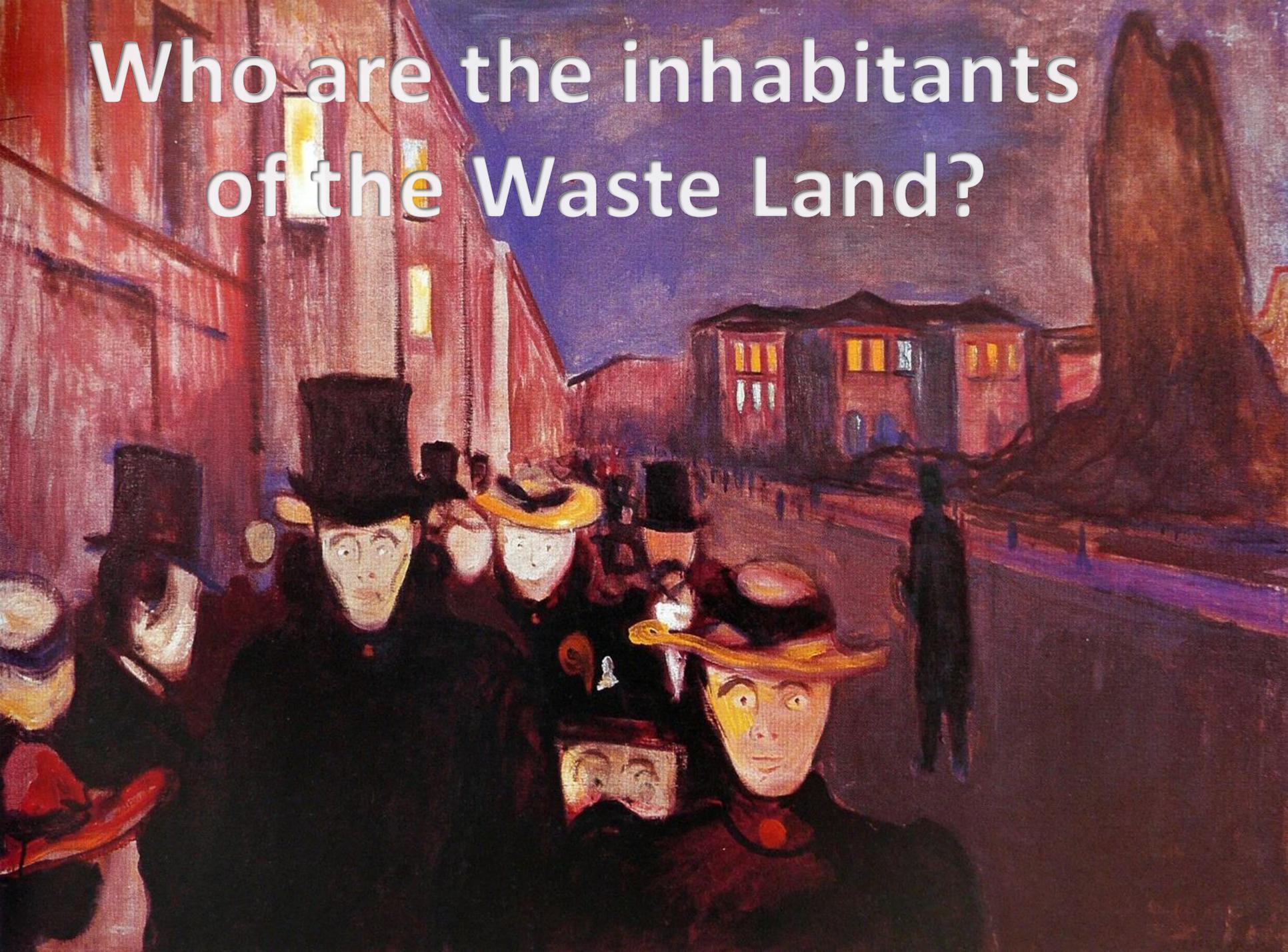
- “Wise”, emphasizes **the degree of desperation** of the post war generation, who found an **empty consolation** only in the **false certainties** provided by an alleged seer, thus superseding in this function religion itself.
- On his card in the Tarot pack, the Hanged Man is shown hanging from one foot from a T-shaped cross. He symbolizes the self-sacrifice of the fertility god who is killed in order that his resurrection may bring fertility once again to land and people.
- The Hanged man= The Fisher king
- Just like Tiresias, Madame Sosostris is not allowed to see, thus reinforcing the idea of the uncertainty of future.

The Fisher King



- The Fisher King is crippled by a magical wound.
- He is wounded in the legs or groin and incapable of standing.
- Spends his day fishing on a lake near his castle.
- His lands are desolate infertile as result of his wound.
- The knight Percival arrives to the castle of the Fisher king. in search of the Holy Grail.
- Percival heals the King thus restoring the land to its original fertility.
- Percival becomes the keeper of the Grail.
- The King's health is linked to that of his land.
- The modern Waste Land is the outcome of man's sickness and crisis.
- Like the Fisher King we are waiting for Percival to save us

Who are the inhabitants
of the Waste Land?





Unreal City (1)

*Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so
many,(2)
I had not thought death had undone so many.
(3)
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, (4)
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William
Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.*

1. Baudelaire's «The Seven Old Men»
2. Dicken's «Coketown» :.....inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hour, with the same sound upon the same pavement, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and next.
3. Dante's Inferno iii
si lunga tratta
di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.
4. Dante's Inferno, iv. 25-27:
Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,
non avea pianto, ma' che di sospiri,
che l'aura eterna facevan tremare

Hence: the poet considers the routine nature of modern life as a form of living repetition whose surviving ritual aspects have become another part of its meaningless workday.



*There I saw one I knew, and stopped him,
crying: "Stetson!(1)*

*"You who were with me in the ships at
Mylae!(2)*

*"That corpse (3) you planted last year in
your garden,*

*"Has it begun to sprout(4)? Will it bloom
this year?*

"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

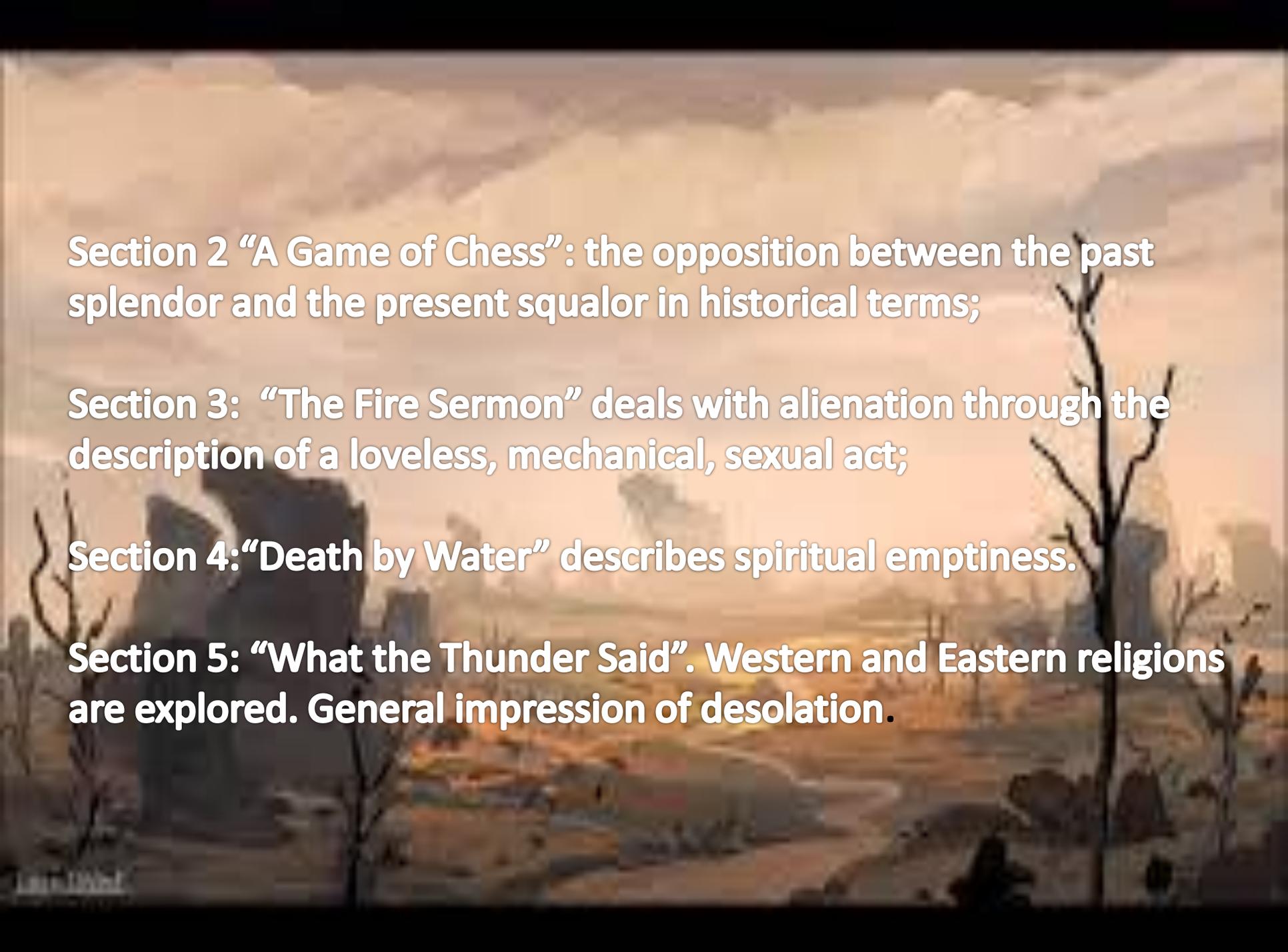
*"Oh keep the Dog (5) far hence, that's friend
to men,*

"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!

*"You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—
mon frère!"(6)*

1. Refers to Ezra Pound who used to wear the Stetson hat.
2. First Punic war, which like WW1, was bloody and eventually considered useless.
3. Metaphor for contemporary man, who feels empty and overwhelmed by an alienated society, which can be compared to death.
4. A new beginning, the victory of life over death.
5. John Webster's «The White Devil». Three-headed Cerberus, which guards the entrance of Hades.
6. Baudelaire's «le Fleurs de Mal». The poet incites the reader to shake off from the present state of apathy (Ennui).

Hence : Eliot is implying, who would want to be reborn in a world without culture?



Section 2 “A Game of Chess”: the opposition between the past splendor and the present squalor in historical terms;

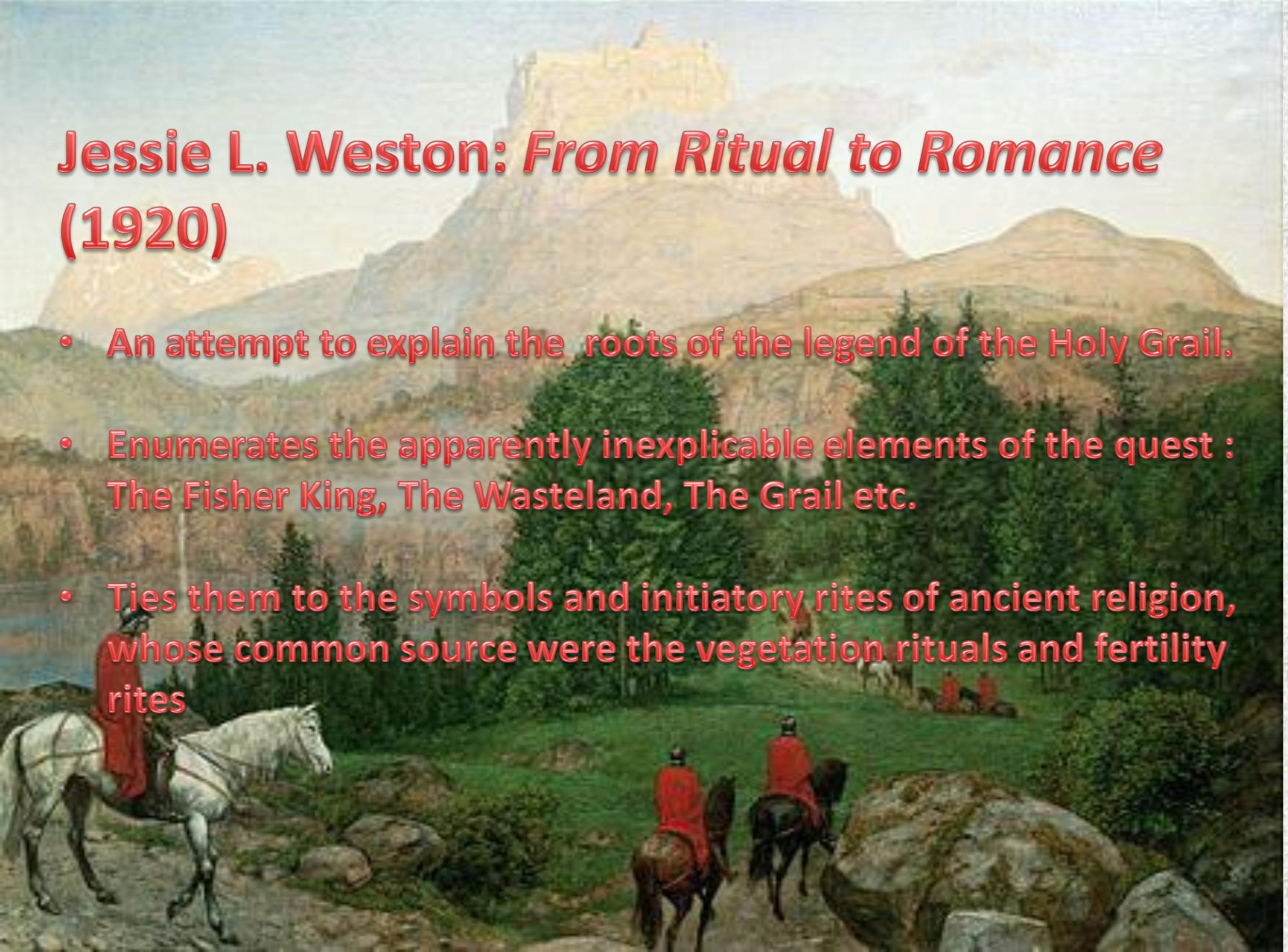
Section 3: “The Fire Sermon” deals with alienation through the description of a loveless, mechanical, sexual act;

Section 4: “Death by Water” describes spiritual emptiness.

Section 5: “What the Thunder Said”. Western and Eastern religions are explored. General impression of desolation.

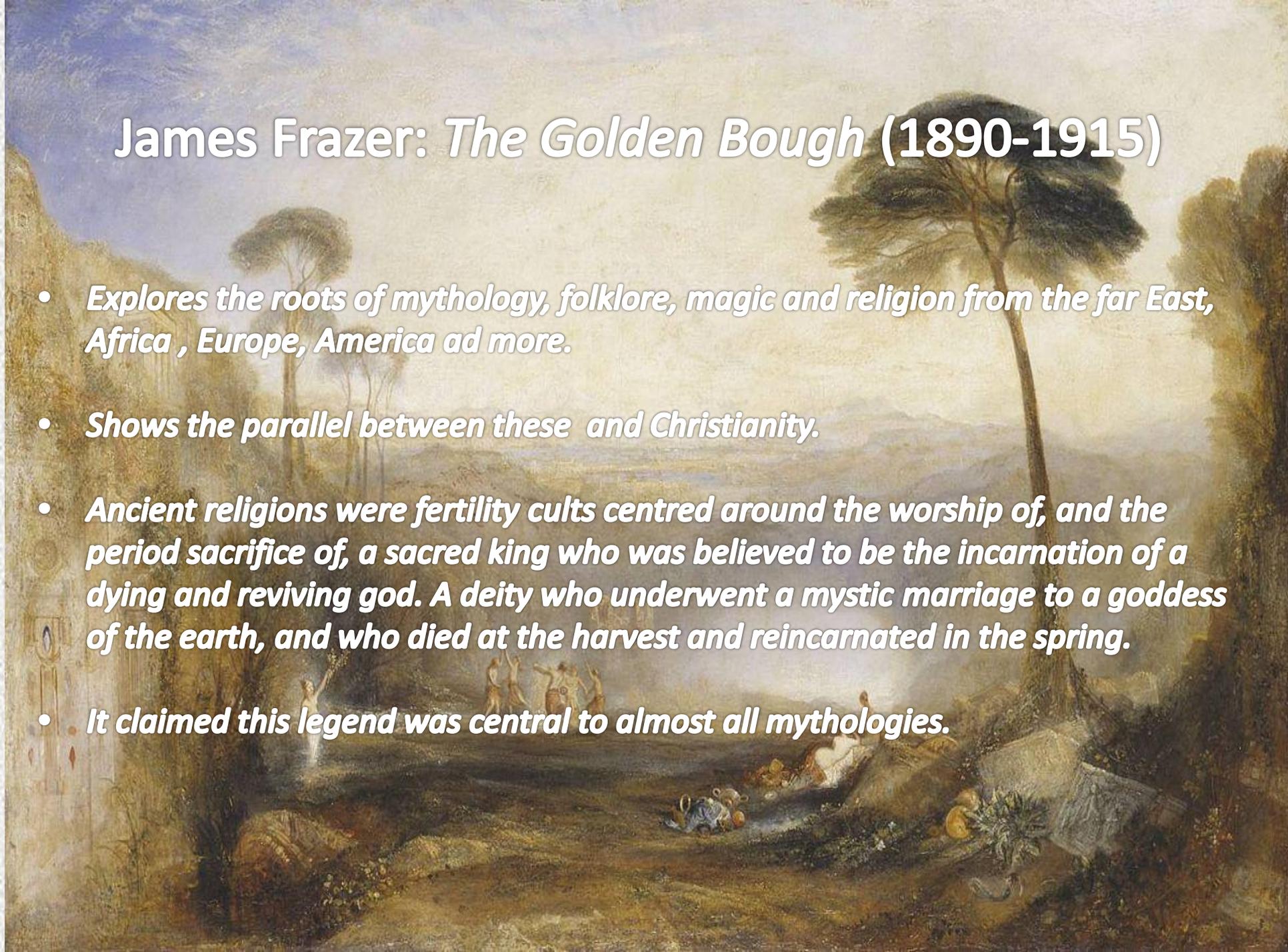
Jessie L. Weston: *From Ritual to Romance* (1920)

- An attempt to explain the roots of the legend of the Holy Grail.
- Enumerates the apparently inexplicable elements of the quest : The Fisher King, The Wasteland, The Grail etc.
- Ties them to the symbols and initiatory rites of ancient religion, whose common source were the vegetation rituals and fertility rites

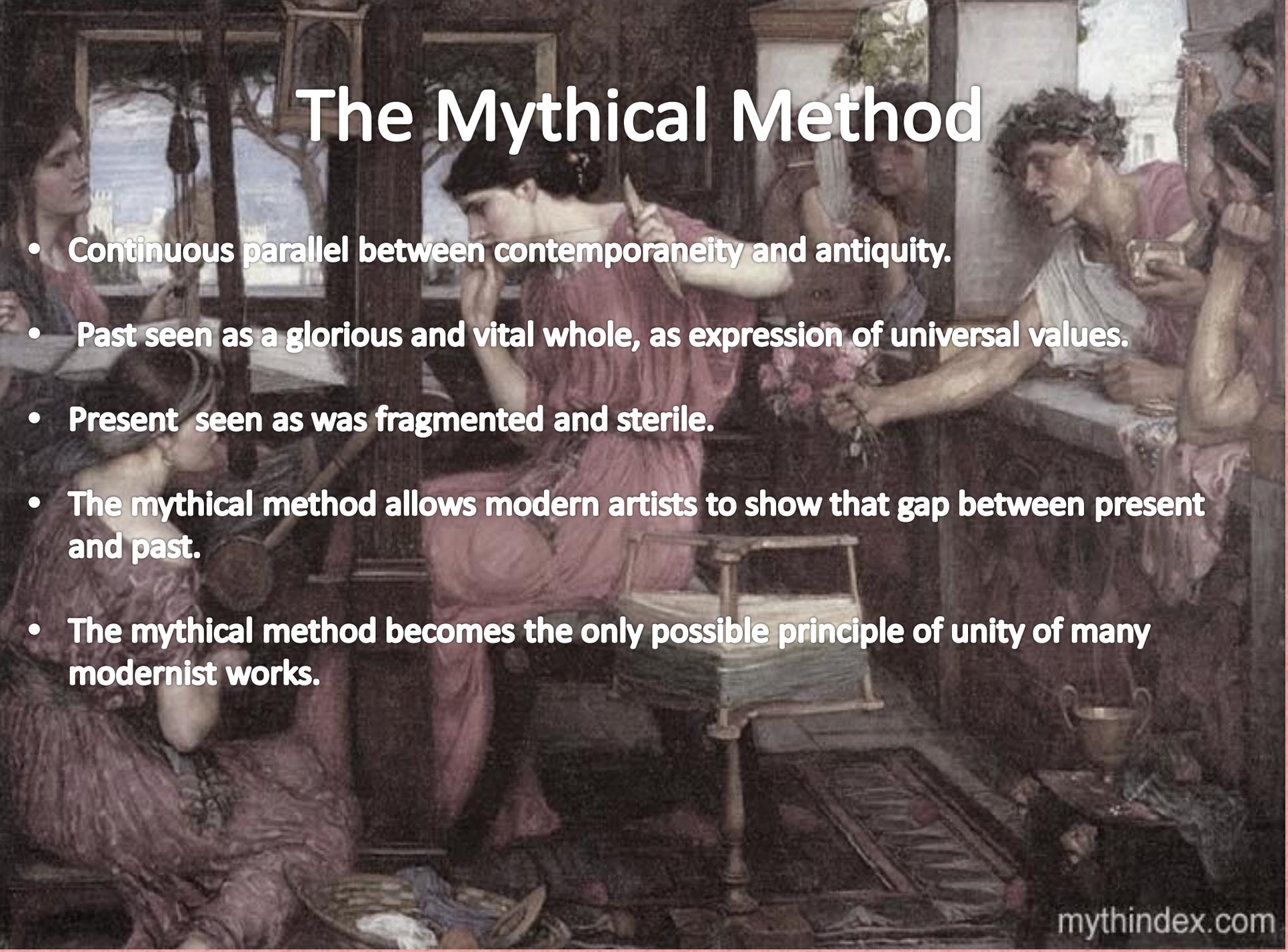


James Frazer: *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915)

- *Explores the roots of mythology, folklore, magic and religion from the far East, Africa, Europe, America and more.*
- *Shows the parallel between these and Christianity.*
- *Ancient religions were fertility cults centred around the worship of, and the period sacrifice of, a sacred king who was believed to be the incarnation of a dying and reviving god. A deity who underwent a mystic marriage to a goddess of the earth, and who died at the harvest and reincarnated in the spring.*
- *It claimed this legend was central to almost all mythologies.*



The Mythical Method



- Continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity.
- Past seen as a glorious and vital whole, as expression of universal values.
- Present seen as was fragmented and sterile.
- The mythical method allows modern artists to show that gap between present and past.
- The mythical method becomes the only possible principle of unity of many modernist works.