FROM T. S. ELIOT TO "AMERICAN PIE"

The Waste Land Image in

Folk Rock Music

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Introduction

The intellectual history behind T. S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*, has no clear beginning, and although the poem is often seen as a product of the disillusionment found after World War I, the idea of a waste land itself goes much further back. Several times in the history of civilization generations have felt that the traditional values and ways of thinking were somehow failing or being destroyed. The literature of these ages has naturally then reflected this disillusionment or fear.

John Donne in his *Anniversary Poems* laments the beginnings of the modern world through his attack on Copernicus, Galileo and Harvey. For Donne, only anarchy and eventual collapse could result from these new ideas. The "new Philosophy," as he saw it, "calls all in doubt"; it destroys the order in which man has moved for an age.

The Sun is lost, and the earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him where to looke for it,
And freely men confesse that this world's spent,
When in the Planets, and the Firmament
They seeke so many new; then see that this
Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.
'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone ... 1

The 19th Century Romantics had to deal then with this idea; that western civilization was losing coherence; that man's life was losing its traditional structures. Neitzsche questions this structure throughout his thought; and by the time we reach the later Victorians, we can identify smaller versions of the waste land. Robert Browning, for instance, in his poem, "Childe Roland To the Dark Tower Came," gives us one description.

... I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature; nothing thrive;
For flowers -- as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
You'd think; a berr had been a treasure trove.

Nor penury, inertness and grimace
In some strange sort, were the land's portion... 2

And in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" we also see a miniature waste land.

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.3

While Eliot's version then can be seen as a direct descendant of ideas as far back as the late Renaissance, it is also distinctly a product of the 20th Century. C. Day Lewis finds it important as a social document on World War I.

It gives an authentic impression of the mentality of educated people in the psychological slump that took place immediately after the war. It makes us aware of the nervous exhaustion, the mental disintegration, the exaggerated self-consciousness, the boredom, the pathetic gropings after the fragments of a shattered faith -- all those symptoms of the psychic disease which ravaged Europe as mercilessly as the Spanish influenza.4
But while describing the disillusionment felt by the post World War I generation, Eliot goes beyond it, as Elizabeth Drew shows.

In The Waste Land ... one of the elements is the blindness and numbness of the external contemporary consciousness; its sterility, impotence, emptiness and aridity; its general loss of any vital relationship with the language of symbols, and in general with the human heritage of tradition. Everything which once spoke to man of the deepest realities and mysteries of his being, has become rationalized and vulgarized and sterilized of its inner content into a mere shell of inorganic materialism.  

The key word here is "contemporary"; Eliot's poem applies to modern civilization in general. Although it ends with a form of hope, or at least determination ("Shall I at least set my lands in order?"), it is the desolation, the alienation that speaks most clearly to the "contemporary consciousness."

Eliot bases his poem in part on the ancient legend of the Fisher King. According to the legend, the Fisher King is impotent; his lands and people share the same affliction; the lands are barren and arid, the men and beasts unable to reproduce themselves. Eliot uses the myth to parallel the modern scene. For the men and women in Eliot's Waste Land, "April is the cruelest month" because it causes a regeneration they would rather forget since they can do nothing about it. People here prefer the Fisher King's impotence. For them winter was warm, "covering / Earth in forgetful snow, feeding / A little life with dried tubers." Sleeplessness haunts them; they are rootless, traveling according to the seasons.

The Grail legend also moves behind Eliot's waste land. The quest figure in The Waste Land asks the central question: How can man escape the sterility, the passionlessness? The quester must first find the Perilous Chapel where the answers lie. He, like Browning's Childe Roland,
must go to the Dark Tower where the spell might be broken and the Fisher King's impotence healed. However, at the end of Eliot's *Waste Land*, we find graves "about the chapel / There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home." Nothing is here.

Madame Sosostris, the "famous clairvoyante," adds to the picture of sterility. She has a bad cold and, as she reads the cards for her customer, she cannot find the Hanged Man, the symbol of the self-sacrificing fertility god whose death is necessary for the regeneration of the waste land. With the loss of this card, Madame Sosostris seems to predict the fate of the waste land she lives in. She is also forbidden to see the burden on the back of the merchant which perhaps contains further clues to the revival of the waste land. Apparently Madame Sosostris is in danger; fortune-tellers and prophets who might bring fertility into the waste land with their cards and rites are pursued by police; they "must be so careful these days."

The city appears to be a modern form of hell; its people ebbing and flowing over London Bridge to the "dead" sound of Saint Mary Woolnoth. Eliot here alludes to Dante's *Inferno*: "I had not thought death had undone so many." From the city in general, Eliot moves to specific dwellings; he shows each end of the social scale to be as "dead" as the sound of Saint Mary's clock. At the upper end, in "A Game of Chess," there is the woman of leisure surrounded by her luxuries. Here, however,

all things deny nature; the fruited vines are carved, the Cupidons golden, the light not of the sun, the perfumes synthetic, the candelabra (seven-branched, as for an altar) devoted to no rite, the very color of the fire-light perverted by sodium and copper salts. The dolphin is carved and seems in a "sad light," not like Antony's delights, "showing his back above the element he lives in."
No meaningful conversation passes between the woman and her lover. They sit in the midst of sterility, sterile themselves, caught in the meaningless ritual of "the hot water at ten. / And if it rains, a closed car at four," waiting ultimately for that "knock upon the door."

At the other end of the scale, the noisy pub, there is little difference. To be sure, the luxury is missing here; there are no carved dolphins or fruited vines, but the sterility follows like the plague. False teeth, adultery and abortion are discussed among the women with little difference in tone or manner. Lil, the apparent topic of discussion, is married; she wants to have the sex but not the children which represent fertility. She has aborted her last one and the question is raised as to why she married if she didn't want children. But there is no evidence that anyone is shocked by Lil's abortion. Children are seen as an unwanted necessity rather than a reaffirmation of fertility and life.

The next section, "The Fire Sermon," further probes the role of sex. It is here that the "sound of horns and motors" brings "Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring," the time of revival and fertility. The young typist hangs her underthings to dry on her window ledge, dining on food from tins. Later she allows her lover his gratification, neither willingly nor unwillingly. She is incapable of any emotion higher than a feeling of release when it is over. The three sisters, undone at various times and places, can "connect / Nothing with nothing" and expect nothing, either. As Hugh Kenner sees it,

Part Three, The Fire Sermon, the most explicit of the five sections, surveys with grave denunciatory candor a world of automatic lust, in which these barriers between person and person which so troubled Prufrock are dissolved by the sup-
pression of the person and the transposition of all human needs and desires to a plane of genital gratification.  

In the final section, the land is described more fully as it mirrors the sterility of its inhabitants. "Here there is no water but only rock." The land is dry, infertile, cracked with drought. There are endless plains, falling towers, blackened walls, "and voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells." Finally the thunder speaks, offering the keys to salvation: Datta, Dayadhyam, Dayata. It remains to be seen if man can give, sympathize, and control, or even set his lands in order. Eliot cannot tell the future; he can only remind us of the past and the present, dramatizing the spiritual waste land in which we currently move.

Eliot's waste land imagery appears in modern as well as Renaissance and Victorian literature. In The Sun Also Rises Hemingway's Paris flickers with light and dark images of hell. Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby was also strongly influenced by Eliot and its central image, the great valley of ashes, recalls The Waste Land. This imagery has by now become so closely associated with modern thought that it has begun to appear in popular cultural forms. For instance, many of the folk rock lyrics of the Sixties contain waste land imagery.

While it is far from the sophistication of Eliot's Waste Land, the folk rock music which grew up in the 1960's seems to be the perfect medium for the expression of the modern waste land. Folk rock, as the name implies, is the combination of folk and rock music, containing elements of both. Like folk music, it employs slang or unconventional expressions. While its lyrics maintain the personal attitudes, that identification
with each listener, which are found in folk ballads, the music has changed. It generally has a faster, heavier beat and employs modern electric guitars, drums, and the other background instruments of rock 'n' roll rather than the simple guitar and/or bass found in original folk music. In fact, it could be said that folk rock is "a fusion of folk-like lyrics with an r-'n'-r beat and background." The folk rock style then captures the attention of its listeners with its rock beat while allowing them an intimacy with the lyrics that usually only comes in folk music.

Of the artists employing folk rock in their recordings, two stand out as popular examples of the waste land imagery. Paul Simon's lyrics have a very clear identification with his listeners. He constantly uses the personal "I" in them to help the identification. Bob Dylan also expresses his thoughts in a way that invites the listeners to identify themselves with the emotions expressed in the songs. Both Simon and Dylan are also concerned with the individual sterility that appears in the waste land and in many of their works it is easy to see this influence.

The larger sections of this paper shall therefore be concerned with the study of the waste land image as reflected in these works. A final section will contain other examples of the waste land in the folk rock music of miscellaneous artists who either do not primarily record folk rock or do not primarily deal with the waste land imagery.
Paul Simon

Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel have been popular figures on the music scene since they appeared in 1963. Paul Simon has written more than 60 songs; both with his partner and alone, he has recorded six albums. Simon's style has become popular primarily because his lyrics are easy to understand, are poetic, and reflect many personal, individual feelings. His melodies are easy to remember and whistle; some have even been used in motion picture sound tracks.

About his process of composition Simon says, "I just sit down with a guitar, pick a key, and play." Sometimes, he says, the words to the entire song come to him first and at others the music comes with no lyrics. At times both come concurrently.

Once I pick a key and start to play, I sing any words that come into my head without trying to make any sense out of them. I tend to sing easy words with a concentration on "oos" and "ah" sounds, which are musically pleasing to me. I also like words beginning with "g's" and "l's" and words that have "t's" and
"k's" in them. Sometimes during this stream of consciousness singing, a phrase will develop that has a naturalness and a meaning, in which case I keep it and start to build a song around it. 10

Simon's lyrics appear to address each listener. As in folk song, he uses the pronoun "I" often, allowing the listener to associate that "I" with a particular person: himself. Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Richard Cory" becomes much more direct and urgent when Simon adds the refrain:

And I work in his factory
And I curse the life I'm living
And I curse my poverty
And I wish that I could be,
Oh, I wish that I could be,
Oh, I wish that I could be
Richard Cory. 11

Richard Cory has everything, or seems to. He has "power, grace and style"; rumors constantly fill the town about the wild life he leads. The "I" of the refrain wants the same life, the same advantages. He cannot understand why Richard Cory shoots himself. However, Cory's life was in a waste land, barren and fruitless. He gave to charity, but never felt charitable. He never felt love, merely the customs and social graces that bound him into his position in society. However, to the underlings Cory had everything their mechanized society could give, and they yearned for the day they, too, could inhabit the waste land of the born rich. Cory is, in a way, like Fitzgerald's Gatsby in his world of artificial parties and superficial people.

As we can see from "Richard Cory," Simon is concerned with a "dead" society --- one in which love is rejected, relationships sterile; and in many of his other songs Eliot's waste land images reappear in the forms and language of the Sixties. For instance, in one of Simon's most popular
songs, "The Sound of Silence," the writer expresses the vision of a land much like Eliot's. The people here do not dare to "disturb the sound of silence." In this vision the writer walks alone on a cold, damp night when his reverie is disturbed by "the flash of a neon light." In this light he sees

Ten thousand people, maybe more,
People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening,
People writing songs that voices never share ...

Like the people in The Waste Land, these people never communicate, never touch each other's lives. "But my words like silent raindrops fell / And echoed / In the wells of silence." The people wish to continue in their waste land. " 'The Words of the prophets are written on the subway wall / And tenement halls.' " The vision is the writer's fear of what is happening to our society. We may retreat into our waste land where personal feelings are unwanted. Here, in a simpler statement, is what Eliot has told us before.

"Dangling Conversation" concerns another failure to communicate. Here again we find a situation much like the woman of leisure and her lover. The man and the woman find their life has fallen into a pattern. "It's a still life water color," he says. The two of them sit "couched in their indifference"; their conversation is meaningless, "dangling." Their lives are expressed in "superficial sighs" and, for that matter, they are merely living "the borders of [their] lives." When they read their favorite poets, a sign of culture like the dolphins and fruited vines of the lady of leisure, they mark what they have lost with bookmarks. As a couple they are "comfortable," but

Like a poem poorly written
We are verses out of rhythm, 
Couplets out of rhyme, 
In syncopated time.  

Their conversation may concern "things that matter," but they cannot touch each other. Like the people of the vision in "The Sound of Silence," they talk without actually saying anything; they hear without actually listening. They are strangers living together,

Lost in the dangling conversation 
And the superficial sighs 
In the borders of our lives.

In "I am a Rock" the young man has loved and lost. It is so painful for him that he decides retreat is the best and only solution. It is December, the winter which covers "Earth in forgetful snow," the favorite season for the waste land's inhabitants. The young man is alone and has "built walls, / A fortress deep and mighty, / That none may penetrate." He no longer wants friendship or love. "If I never loved I never would have cried," he says, indicating the hard, bitter side of the love story. Rather than face this painful part of his humanity, his life, the young man joins those in the waste land. He has books and poetry to protect him: written expressions of his emotions, like the painted pictures of natural scenes Eliot's lady of leisure has in her home. Mechanical or natural things like rocks and trees have no feelings; therefore their state must be preferrable to human emotions. "And a rock feels no pain, / And an island never cries."

The short song, "Bookends," looking back on the memory of a love affair, looks back on a time before the waste land, "A time of innocence, / A time of confidences," a time when people were close. All that is left now, though, is the memory of that time.
"Patterns" deals with the idea of the social roles that people must play. As in "Richard Cory" and "Dangling Conversation," the young man in "Patterns" has no choice about how he will run his life.

From the moment of my birth  
To the instant of my death,  
There are patterns I must follow  
Just as I must breathe each breath.  
Like a rat in a maze  
The path before me lies.  
And the pattern never alters  
Until the rat dies.

The typist in Eliot's waste land is in the same situation. Her life has become a series of patterns. She eats from tins every night, dries her underthings on the window ledge and makes love to her boyfriend all without thinking, without feeling. It is expected of her and she obliges. Social custom dictates that children be included in a marriage, but there is a stronger social custom in the waste land: appearances. False teeth and abortions go together to keep a woman beautiful. Rather than preserve the fertility of the land with children, Lil would rather preserve her own figure. In Simon's song man cannot completely understand these patterns and therefore cannot control them. In this way man has already become mechanized, computerized, caught in the sterility.

An echo of this social role or denial of what is individual is also seen in "Flowers Never Bend With the Rainfall."

I don't know what is real,  
I can't touch what I feel,  
And I hide behind the shield of my illusions.

Life in the waste land is built on illusions: appearances on the outside, emptiness within. When all people have are illusions, they must follow the lead of the "I" in "Flowers."
So I'll continue to pretend
That my life will never end,
And flowers never bend
With the rainfall.

In Eliot the woman of leisure and her lover have only illusions and social conventions which they dream of escaping, but cannot. "I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street / With my hair down, so." However, they are caught in the patterns:

The hot water at ten,
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

Two of Simon's most biting criticisms of society are in his songs "The Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine" and "A Single Desultory Philippic (Or How I was Robert McNamara'd Into Submission)." In "Pleasure Machine" we have the typical waste land escape into the "death," the obliteration of winter, the idea of traveling to avoid problems and individuality; the escape comes with the new special, the bargain of the century, the Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine.

We'll eliminate your pain,
We can neutralize your brain
You'll feel just fine
Now
Buy a Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine. 19

"A Simple Desultory Philippic" points out more or less the same idea. We live with ideologies from our birth; we are expected to follow whatever is currently popular. The man who "doesn't dig poetry" and who "when you say Dylan, he thinks you're talking about Dylan Thomas," is ridiculed; "the man ain't got no culture." Americans follow the crowd ("I been Ayn Randed, nearly branded / Communist, 'cause I'm left-handed")20; the final indignation comes when "I just discovered somebody's tapped my phone."
In "Blessed" man is lost without his rituals, his religions. God has gone out of life.

Oh Lord, Why have you forsaken me? I got no place to go.

Man has been on his own for too long. He needs help.

Oh Lord, Why have you forsaken me? I have tended my own garden Much too long.

However, the church has become like the painted picture of Philomel; her cry has become vulgar to modern ears. "Blessed is the church service makes me nervous." And there seems no way out.

My words trickle down, like a wound That I have no intention to heal.

Simon's "America" echoes this sterility, this lack of direction. The young wanderer finds a girl; they decide to "marry [their] fortunes together" to search for America, and in this search, they resemble the questors for the Chapel Perilious. On the bus traveling across America, they play silly games but the wanderer is in earnest.

"Kathy, I'm lost," I said Though I knew she was sleeping. "I'm empty and aching and I don't know why." He realizes that everyone in America is searching for the answer, looking for America, but no one realizes that the answer is within him. Their cars flow along the New Jersey Turnpike like the Londoners across the bridge, going back and forth searching for what they'll never find.

"Congratulations," about divorce and the failure of love, echoes the sterile relationships found in Eliot's waste land. As Simon tells us, Love will do you in, and love will wash you out.
And needless to say
You won't stand a chance,
And you won't stand a chance.24

There is a definite question in his mind as to whether a man and a woman can "live together in peace." None of the men/women relationships in the waste land is finally meaningful; they merely exist. We have the potential here for another "I am a Rock," a withdrawal into the waste land from unsuccessful love.

Bob Dylan

As the major influence on the rock music of the Sixties, Bob Dylan predates Paul Simon. Michael Gray says

Dylan is the greatest rock 'n' roll star in the world. Partly of course, this is because he's the best rock writer and singer and performer there has ever been; but partly -- and the two aren't by any means totally distinguishable -- it's because he's become an idol, a superstar.25

Dylan reached a majority of the young white middle-class population with his protest songs first and later his intricate word pictures which owe at least indirectly a certain debt to the surrealism of the Twenties. Every major artist from Peter, Paul and Mary through Leon Russell has sung Dylan's songs, usually including "Blowin' in the Wind," possibly Dylan's most popular. And yet there is a difference between Dylan and those who use his songs and follow his style.

There is, then, a fundamental sense in which Dylan cannot be placed alongside most heroes of the mass media; he is incapable of that falsity of consciousness, that bland superficiality on which they depend and which they purvey to the ulcerated tribesmen of McLuhan's global village.26
Dylan started out as a folk singer. He based his life and songs on Woody Guthrie, the great fifties folk singer. Later as he began to branch out and use his own ideas, he began to move into more protest and less folk. Finally, he broke out of the folk mold completely with "The Times They Are A'Changin'." With that behind him -- and it was, in the end, what Radio Luxemburg calls a chart-bound sound -- Dylan invented a new form, folk rock." In this folk rock form Dylan began expressing many of the twentieth century ideas -- the ideas of desolation, alienation, in short, the waste land image.

In one of his early songs, "Man on the Street," Dylan expresses clearly and simply the idea of the alienation of the human race.

I'll sing you a song, ain't very long,
'Bout an old man who never done wrong.
How he died nobody can say,
They found him dead in the street one day.28

No one cares about the man "who never done wrong." A crowd stops and stares; a policeman jabs the dead man and threatens to throw him in jail. Then comes the realization that he is dead, not sleeping. No one mourns, they simply don't care.

"Blowin' In The Wind," Dylan's most popular song, expresses much the same idea. How long, he asks, can things go on as they are? How long can man remain sightless, unaware or uncaring of his fate?

Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?29

The answer, he says, "is blowin' in the wind."

"A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" uses a "Lord Randall"-type ballad of question and answer which sets up a strong contrast between the "blue-eyed son" and the horrors the boy sees. The boy has been
... on six crooked highways,
He's stepped in the middle of seven sad forests,
He's been out in front of a dozen dead oceans,
He's been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard.

What has he seen then in this vast waste land of "dead oceans" and graveyards?

I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it,
I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it,
I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin',
I saw a room full of men with their hammers a bleedin',
I saw a white ladder all covered with water,
I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken,
I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children.

The "blue-eyed son," the "darling young one" has seen and heard all of the horrors of a waste land where there is only sterility, where people no longer care for each other ("Heard ten thousand whisperin' and nobody listenin'"), where people can be wounded in love or hate. Dylan's "Hard Rain" is often referred to as the story of the atomic holocaust -- the ultimate war, the ultimate waste land.

"Talkin' World War III Blues" refers to a dream of the world after World War III.

Well, the whole thing started at 3 o'clock fast,
It was all over by quarter past."

A quick war, but a crippling one. As the narrator travels around the city, he finds enemies everywhere. Hungry, he asks for a string bean, and he's shot at. Lonely, he sees a man at a hot dog stand and tries to be friendly, but the man "screamed a bit and away he flew. / Thought I was a Communist."

When he sees a girl who has also survived, he tries to get her to help him re-establish the human race. But she only jerks away and replies, "'Hey man, you crazy or sumpin', / You see what happened last time they started.'" Dylan ends his song on a startling note.

Well now time passes and now it seems
Everybody's having them dreams,
Everybody sees themselves walkin' around with no one else.

Each man is isolated, alienated and only concerned for his own survival.

"Advice to Geraldine on Her Miscellaneous Birthday" also contains many elements of the waste land. Dylan outlines a society that fears individualism.

stay in line, stay in step, people
are afraid of someone who is not
in step with them. it makes them
look foolish t' themselves for
being in step ...32

People feel threatened, he says; they'll think they've missed something;
people in Eliot's work flowing back and forth over London Bridge. They are provincial, narrow, insular; everyone must be for America, must go to church, must support the popular culture. These people are dead to new sights and sounds and want everyone to be like them. Above all else, no one must bring any hint of fertility into their sterile land.

do Not create anything, it will be misinterpreted. it will not change.
it will follow you the rest of your life...

People in this world only create trouble by being different; the creative threaten April, the cruelest month,

... breeding
Lilacs out of a dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

People want to be, to exist in their waste land. Finally, Dylan says

... when told t'look at
yourself... never look. when asked
t'give your real name... never give it.

Stay dead. Play along. It is safer to be in the waste land, among the dead.
Even its title indicates that "Desolation Row" expresses Eliot's imagery richly. In fact, it is the one of Dylan's songs that is perhaps closest to Eliot's original waste land in style, size, and content. Like Eliot's poem it attempts to deal with an entire culture, and like Eliot's poem, its chief images deal with isolation and alienation. We find some of Eliot's characters here as well. There is a fortune-teller, kin to Madame Sosostris, and "sexless patients," those enjoying only the "filth" of genital gratification rather than the rich, rewarding love two people can share. We find perversion rampant; officials are blind, and "the riot squad they're restless / They need somewhere to go." Ophelia is here, pining for death, and Einstein, unknown, "so immaculately frightful." We also find a troop of agents which resemble the German SS.

Now at midnight all the agents
And the superhuman crew
Come out and round up everyone
That knows more than they do
Then they bring them to the factory
Where the heart-attack machine
Is strapped across their shoulders
And then the kerosene
Is brought down from the castles
By insurance men who go
Check to see that nobody is escaping
To Desolation Row.

Here it is again dangerous to be different, above the herd. The land is a complete absurdity. There are no human relationships; Dr. Filth appears to rule. Eliot and Pound are "fighting in the captain's tower / While calypso singers laugh at them." Ophelia appears as a prostitute who finds "her sin is her lifelessness."

And the only sound that's left
After the ambulances go
Is Cinderella sweeping up
On Desolation Row.
"Ballad of a Thin Man" follows the same general outline. Everybody asks, "Who is that man?"; only irrelevant answers are given.

Because something is happening here
But you don't know what it is
Do you, Mr. Jones?34

Everything is strange, unusual. The normal, seemingly sane man is a freak in this world. A carnival image ties the entire song together. Sword swallowers and one-eyed midgets are found in this waste land, and Mr. Jones must be what they say "or else go home." He must give up his essential humanity and become one of them. Instead of a machine image here, where man is little more than a computer, we find the freak image. Perhaps to join the waste land means to shed your humanity for the "freak" that is in you.

Despite the pun on the word "stoned," "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35" also expresses the waste land. People will attack you for anything, Dylan says.

Well, they'll stone ya when you're trying to be so good,
They'll stone ya just a-like they said they would.
They'll stone ya when you're tryin' to go home.
Then they'll stone ya when you're there all alone.
But I would not feel so all alone,
Everybody must get stoned.35

Everyone must conform. Everyone suffers the arbitrary rulings of society:
"everybody must get stoned"; everyone flows across London Bridge as those who are damned in Dante's Inferno.

In "All Along the Watchtower" the world strangles its inhabitants. However, the fool or joker, who finds the society confusing, wants out.
"There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief."36 He feels no one knows the worth of life.

Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth,
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth.
Now the joker is traditionally the figure who sees and speaks the truth; only jokers can see our present waste land. The only other character here is a thief, technically an outcast, one who will never be accepted into the waste land. Some people, says the thief to the joker, "feel that life is but a joke." It is absurd, unreal. But, he continues, the two of them know better.

But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate, So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.

They know life has meaning, outside of the waste land, but they have no answer. While they are talking

Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl, Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.

The chapel is empty, the wind echoes through the dry land as the two lone-some unknown riders approach -- seeking the answer to the confusion the joker and the thief see.

Dylan has another vision of the waste land in "I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine." In the middle of his waste land, his soul sold to the devil, man finds a crusader, one who sees the dangers and warns against them.

"Arise, arise," he cried so loud, In a voice without restraint, 'Come out, ye gifted kings and queens And hear my sad complaint, No martyr is among ye now Whom you can call your own, So go on your way accordingly But know you're not alone.'

The narrator is among those who put St. Augustine to death, the god who could rescue them from the waste land. In the waste land it is natural to kill those who could revitalize the empty land, the stagnant people.

Madame Sosostris is, after all, one of a persecuted band. She and her
followers hold the key to rebirth. The narrator wakes from his dream and cries. He is slipping into the waste land and does not want to. He is angry for his actions in his dream. However, he is already so far into the waste land that his immediate psychic reaction is to kill anyone who threatens it.

"I Am A Lonesome Hobo" shows what can happen when man enters his own personal waste land. Like Richard Cory, this hobo had everything money could buy.

Well, once I was rather prosperous,
There was nothing I did lack.
I had fourteen-karat gold in my mouth
And silk upon my back.38

But, like Cory, these goods became his world, his waste land. He became so obsessed with them and "did not trust [his] brother." Eventually he lost all he had and found that "where another man's life might begin, /
That's exactly where mine ends." He is now a social outcast, an ex-con, wandering in shame. Going from what seems to be one waste land to another he leaves a message for future generations.

Kind ladies and kind gentlemen,
Soon I will be gone.
But let me just warn you all,
Before I do pass on;
Stay free from petty jealousies,
Live by no man's code,
And hold your judgment for yourself
Lest you wind up on this road.

The irony of the entire song is that the hobo has broken out of the real waste land: self-induced conformity and societal rules. He is still caught in a waste land of his own making, however. He wants his riches back; he would prefer the waste land to his present state of potential freedom.
The unfeeling masses appear finally in "Three Angels." Three angels, blowing their horns, are anchored above the street, left over from Christmas. They survey a world where no one cares. People pass below them all day but no one notices. They all go their own ways. A bakery truck stops beneath the angels and the driver "peeks out, trying to find one face / In this concrete world of souls." He can't. And

The angels play on their horns all day,
The whole earth in progression seems to pass by.
But does anyone hear the music they play,
Does anyone even try?

The angels appear to symbolize the world beyond the waste land, the world of the spirit, the world of commitment and concern. However, no one listens; no one cares.

John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and Don McLean

Besides Simon and Dylan, many of the rock writers of the Sixties and Seventies use the waste land image in their work. None, however, uses it as extensively as the above. Three brief examples should serve to illustrate.

The Beatles are primarily known for their rock revolution in the early Sixties. As idols of the younger teens, they cornered the market on what is now known as "bubble-gum" music, or music directed primarily at the younger teens which usually tells only a simple tale of love. As they developed in style and maturity as singers, the Beatles moved on towards more meaningful types of music, including some which contain waste land
imagery. The title itself is indicative that John Lennon and Paul McCartney's "Nowhere Man" contains waste land elements.

He's a real Nowhere Man,
Sitting in his Nowhere Land,
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody,
Doesn't have a point of view;
Knows not where he's going to
Isn't he a bit like you and me?

This man is like the three sisters who can connect nothing with nothing in Eliot's poem. He is not really human at all; he is more like a No-man.

The Nowhere Man is blind to life and his fellow human beings; he only "sees what he wants to see." In fact, he can't even express his own opinion; he "doesn't have a point of view." His existence is in a waste land; he has no plans for what he is or where he is going. The writers feel he is missing something, but the fact is he doesn't realize it. Life is his to command if he would only break out of his waste land. Following through all this is, of course, the tag line: "Isn't he a bit like you and me?"

The lonely people in "Eleanor Rigby," another Lennon-McCartney effort, are following the same path. Eleanor herself is a mysterious person "wearing the face that she keeps in a jar by the door." She has a mask to keep her from those around her. She can put on her social customs and acts as she leaves her house, as she enters society. This is the influence of the waste land. Appearances are most important, not the person within. No one cares for Eleanor as a person; she "lives in a dream," apart, separate from other people. When she dies, she is forgotten. No one comes to see her funeral and her name can't even survive her body. It is as though she had never lived. No one is saved by the funeral service; religion again fails. Father McKenzie has the same lonely life as Eleanor. He at least brings rites and
rituals into the waste land and could help with man's salvation. But "no one comes near"; no one ever hears the sermons he spends his time on. No one helps him in his lonely life at all. He even darns his socks by himself. There is no interaction in the waste land of "Eleanor Rigby," only sterility and a noticeable lack of emotion or feeling. And there is no indication of how we got there or how we can get out.

All the lonely people, where do they all come from?
All the lonely people, where do they all belong?

The most recent waste land imagery is found in Don McLean's "American Pie," a ballad in the tradition of Dylan which resembles "Desolation Row" since it deals with an entire culture. While the story is essentially about the death of music, what is left after this death is the waste land.

I met a girl who sang the blues and I asked her for some happy news
But she just smiled and turned away
I went down to the sacred store where I heard the music years before
But the man there said the music wouldn't play.
And in the streets the children screamed, the lovers cried and the poets dreamed
But not a word was spoken, the church bells all were broken.
And the three men I admire most, the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost
They caught the last train for the coast the day the music died.

McLean follows through the entire song with these images. We're on our own now, he says, with no music, rites, or religion to serve us. There is no happy news; in the midst of noise and squalor no words are spoken, no meaningful conversation is heard. The rites, here seen as religion, have deserted man. Things have changed since the music died, since man lost his humanity.

Now for two years we've been on our own, and moss grows fat on a rollin' stone
But that's not how it used to be when the jester sang for the king and queen
In a coat he borrowed from James Dean and a voice that came from you and me.

Here, as in Dylan, the jester is the character who understands the waste land,
Now we have no jester to point the way, to guide us. McLean also refers to us as "a generation lost in space / With no time left to start again." No time to start over and redeem ourselves from the waste land. At the end of McLean's song, the night is shattered by the sacrificial rite, perhaps marrying us to the waste land, and Satan, who has finally conquered all, laughs delightedly.

Throughout the song McLean shows parallels to Eliot. As mentioned before, he is concerned with an entire culture, the current American culture. Here at the end as well, the sound of Satan's laughter echoes through the dry land as wickedly as the howl of the wind in Eliot's empty chapel. Both end on a hopeless note. No one is home. Perhaps the most outstanding similarity however, is found in the lack of water in both lands. Eliot's land of "no water but only rock" is closely paralleled by McLean's "drove my Chevy to the levee, but the levee was dry."

As seen before, Eliot's Waste Land is the product of many generations of alienation as far back as the late Renaissance. While he did draw on these past waste lands, Eliot also incorporated the new elements of isolation from his own generation, "the psychological slump that took place immediately after the war." But the waste land has not stopped with Eliot. The world was devastated by another world war, one which actually brought the possibility of total destruction to the eyes of the world. Pictures of the damage done to Hiroshima by the first atomic bomb revive images of Eliot's dry, sterile land devoid of people and anything but the wind. For the generations grow-
ing up with the constant threat of total destruction, the waste land cannot be far from thought at any time. Simon and Dylan obviously reflect this preoccupation.

There is, however, a major difference between the people in Eliot's waste land and those projected in the current folk rock music. Eliot's people have no idea that they are in a waste land. They continue in their patterns without any thought as to their existence. The only one who seems to understand the plight is Tiresias, the "I" who sits fishing at the conclusion, debating whether to set his lands in order. The "I" in both Simon and Dylan is a much more diligent observer. He is almost always aware of the patterns he is caught in. The young man in Simon's "Patterns" in fact actually compares himself to "a rat in a maze." He doesn't know the way out, but he is aware of the problem, willing to fight. The man in "Dangling Conversation" realizes how sterile his relationship is even if he is powerless to escape. Unlike the Londoners flowing mindlessly back and forth across the bridge, these characters understand the problems of the waste land. The poet, in this case, by actively involving himself in his poetry (the identification with "I"), forces us to identify ourselves with the inhabitants of the waste land. The poet's persona is a simple character, an Everyman. He is not, as in Eliot, a half-mythic, shadowy character.

Dylan's songs are much the same. In "Advice to Geraldine" Dylan's advice is to stay in the waste land. But he identifies it quite accurately. He sees that everyone "follows the leader"; he knows they are afraid to be different, but he can offer no solution. In "Talkin' World War III Blues" everyone is having the same dreams, the same visions of the waste land. This is in direct opposition to Eliot's mindless Londoners who have no idea of their
peril. Again, in Dylan, there is no way out, but at least these inhabitants are aware of the problem.

The language is different from Eliot to the folk rock poets as well. Eliot's style is intricate, demanding and allusive. He uses constant references to myths from all nations and to other literature. While Simon and Dylan refer to previous works (see Simon's use of Lowell and Voltaire), their references are fewer and simpler. It doesn't require a literary background to understand. The references flow smoothly into the rest of the work; they are added attractions, not an essential part of the work. Most of Simon and some of Dylan is in the simple folk style with informal language as well, even though Dylan eventually uses his language to paint Eliot-like word pictures.

Perhaps the major distinction can be found in that Eliot's Waste Land was written for the literary cult, the scholar, while Simon and Dylan are obviously directing their works to the "mass man," the middle class. Stylistically, Eliot is detached from the masses he describes; Simon and Dylan as well as the other folk rock writers are involved, are part of the masses they describe. Eliot warns from a distance; the folk rock writers speak from experience, from actual involvement in the waste land. Eliot is removed from the search for an answer; the folk rock writers are actively involved.

Despite the differences, the waste land is still being expressed, more so now than in Eliot's time. And with its current expression in popular culture, through folk rock, it touches more people and forces them to look at their lives. Perhaps folk rock will succeed in carrying the warning to those caught in Eliot's waste land.
Notes


7 Kenner, p. 164.


10 Simon, p. x.


12 Simon, p. 305.

13 Simon, p. 312.

14 Simon, p. 306.

15 Simon, p. 318.
16 The name "Patterns" is not original with Simon. In fact, he has borrowed his entire idea here from the poem by Amy Lowell. In Lowell's poem, the life of a young woman is shown as carefully controlled by the social customs dictated to her. The poem is set in the 18th Century when even the shrubs and flowers were trimmed to fit a design or pattern. Against this background, Lowell's narrator feels that she too is "a rare pattern." Like Simon's man caught in the rat's maze, the narrator feels trapped as well. When her love is killed in the war she is caught in the social responses, trapped now in conventions. The only one she felt could save her from these patterns is now dead. Life is a pattern of walking in the gardens, war is a pattern of attack and retreat, and even death is a pattern of funerals and mourning. Finally the narrator can only ask the essential question: "What are patterns for?"

17 Simon, p. 310.
18 Simon, p. 312.
19 Simon, p. 311.
20 Simon, p. 311.
21 Simon, p. 306.

22 As in Simon's use of Amy Lowell, his reference here to Voltaire shows a continual literary preoccupation which appears in many of the folk rock writers of the Sixties.
23 Simon, p. 317.
26 Gray, p. 9.
27 Gray, p. 143.
29 Dylan, p. 33.
30 Dylan, p. 38.
31 Dylan, p. 44.
32 Dylan, p. 118.
33 Dylan, p. 193.
34 Dylan, p. 190.
35 Dylan, p. 205.
36 Dylan, p. 259.
37 Dylan, p. 260.
38 Dylan, p. 266.
39 Dylan, p. 295.
41 Ryan, p. 8.
Bibliography


