

Ts eliot journey of the magi analysis essay



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T. S. Eliot's poem "Journey of the Magi" interprets the wisemen's trip to travel see baby Jesus from a different position than most of us are used to hearing. The scriptural version that is most popular doesn't seem to advert anything bad or hard about the journey that they made. The wisemen had a batch traveling against them to do their travelling terrible. It was in the winter, they rode on smelly camels, and the disquieted camel work forces were no comfort to the rolling Magi's.

In the first portion of the verse form, the talker, which is one of the Magi, is stating about the conditions that they faced. In the 5th line he states, "The really dead of winter." Normally we see the journey that they made as a peaceable short trip across a level desert, but the wisemen faced snow, unfriendly towns, and grouching assistants. At times, the talker references that he misses his place and the "silken miss conveying sherbert." They traveled all dark and took bends kiping, the Wise Men must hold wanted to acquire at that place earlier to acquire their trip over merely every bit shortly as possible. Although the wisemen were excited about the birth, the talker shows a sense of unhappiness besides. The birth of this new leader means a decease to them in a manner. They know in their Black Marias that this neonate is traveling to impact their life in a really large manner. The sight of the babe deeply changed the manner they lived their lives from that minute on. They saw the people in their lands "clutching their gods" and they didn't see any kind of satisfaction in it.

To me it seems like the Wise Men believe because in the stoping line the talker says "I should be sword lily of another decease." The Magi who is talking must hold realized that the Hebrew Prophetss were right when

foretelling that the King of the Universe would be born and alter the manner that the universe works and believes. The Magi is looking forward to the decease of the neonates so that he can be born once more. The birth and decease that the talker negotiations about is a birth and decease of everyone. The birth of the kid. the decease of himself. the birth of the new belief. the decease of the neonates are all merely a few of my ideas. Even after they return place. they know that something feels different. The Magi's lands were no longer at easiness. The talker makes me believe that the whole universe had a kind of stirring and made them experience uneasy.

The imagination in the verse form draws you in and makes you experience that the wisemen must hold truly wanted to see the new babe. This poem brings a sense of confusion to me because I want to cognize the whole narrative. T. S. Eliot broadens the idea on this narrative in such an huge manner. "Journey of the Magi" is a verse form about a life-changing trip that a few people took and the penetration that merely a great poet would see.

Grover Smith

"Journey of the Magi" is the soliloquy of a adult male who has made his ain pick. who has achieved belief in the Incarnation. but who is still portion of that life which the Redeemer came to brush off. Like Gerontion. he can non interrupt loose from the yesteryear. Oppressed by a sense of death-in-life (Tiresias' anguish "between two lives"). he is content to subject to "another death" for his concluding rescue from the universe of old desires and Gods. the universe of "the satiny miss." It is non that the Birth that is besides Death has brought him hope of a new life. but that it has revealed to

him the hopelessness of the old life. He is resigned instead than joyous. absorbed in the negation of his former being but non yet physically liberated from it. Whereas Gerontion is " waiting for rain" in this life. and the hollow work forces desire the " eyes" in the following life. the talker here has put behind him both the life of the senses and the affirmatory symbol of the Child ; he has reached the province of wanting nil.

His negation is partially nescient. for he does non understand in what manner the Birth is a Death ; he is non cognizant of the forfeit. Alternatively. he himself has become the forfeit ; he has reached basically. on a symbolic degree true to his emotional. if non to his rational. life. the low. negative phase that in a mystical advancement would be prerequisite to brotherhood. Although in the actual fortunes his will can non be fixed upon mystical experience. because of the clip and status of his being. he corresponds symbolically to the searcher as described by St. John of the Cross in The Ascent of Mount Carmel. Having foremost approached the affirmatory symbol. or instead. for him. the affirmatory world. he has experienced failure ; negation is his secondary option.

The quest of the Magi for the Christ kid. a long backbreaking journey against the disheartenments of nature and the ill will of adult male. to happen at last. a enigma impenetrable to human wisdom. was described by Eliot in strongly conversational phrases adapted from one of Lancelot Andrewes' discourses of the Birth:

A cold coming they had of it at this clip of the twelvemonth. merely the worst clip of the twelvemonth to take a journey. and specially a long journey in.

The ways deep. the conditions crisp. the years abruptly. the Sun farthest off. in solstitio brumali. " the really dead of winter. "

Besides in Eliot's ideas were the huge oriental comeuppances and the camel trains and Marches described in *Anabase*. by St. -J. Perse. He himself had begun work in 1926 on an English interlingual rendition of that verse form. printing it in 1930. Other elements of his tone and imagination may hold come from Kipling's " The Explorer" and from Pound's " Exile's Letter. " The H2O factory was recollected from his ain yesteryear ; for in *The Use of Poetry*. speech production of the manner in which " certain images recur. charged with emotion. " he was to advert " six bullies seen through an unfastened window playing cards at dark at a little Gallic railroad junction where there was a water-mill. " In animating the same incident. the all right proleptic symbolism of " three trees on the low sky. " a omen of Calvary. with the redolent image of " an old white horse" introduces one of the simplest and most pregnant transitions in all of his work:

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the header.

Six custodies at an unfastened door cubing for pieces of Ag.

And pess kicking the empty wine-skins.

Here are allusions to the Communion (through the tavern " bush") . to the paschal lamb whose blood was smeared on the headers of Israel. to the blood money of Judas. to the contumely suffered by Christ before the Crucifixion. to the soldiers projecting tonss at the pes of the Cross. and. possibly. to the pilgrims at the unfastened grave in the garden.

The reaching of the Magi at the topographic point of Nativity, whose symbolism has been anticipated by the fresh flora and the factory "beating the darkness." is merely a "satisfactory" experience. The storyteller has seen and yet he does not to the full understand; he accepts the fact of Birth but is perplexed by its similarity to a Death, and to decease, which he has seen before:

All this was a long clip ago. I remember.

And I would make it once more, but set down

This set down

This: were we led all that manner for

Birth or Death?

Were they led there for Birth or for Death? or, possibly, for neither? or to do a pick between Birth and Death? And whose Birth or Death was it? their ain, or Another's? Uncertainty leaves him metagrobolized and unaroused to the full luster of the unusual epiphany. So he and his chaps have come back to their ain Kingdoms, where.

... no longer at easiness here, in the old dispensation.

With an foreign people seizing their Gods (which are now foreign Gods) . they linger non yet free to have " the dispensation of the grace of God. " The talker has reached the terminal of one universe, but despite his credence of the disclosure as valid, he can non stare into a universe beyond his ain.

From T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1956.

Robert Crawford

'Journey of the Magi' . written in 1927. contains non merely material quoted in Eliot's 1926 study. 'Lancelot Andrewes' . and remembrances from Eliot's main life (some of which he catalogued when reminiscing in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism) . It besides looks back towards his battle with the crude. Like 'The Hollow Men' and parts of The Waste Land. this poem's scene is a desert one. The traditional landscape. nevertheless. is ne'er mentioned. being involved indirectly through the inside informations of 'the camels galled. sorefooted. refractory' . The verse form is deliberately unconventional: no reference of gold. olibanum. and sweet cicely. But it is conventional in footings of Eliot's before poesy ; though less dramatic. its decision is every bit revelatory as earlier. The reader becomes cognizant that. Nemi-like. the birth of the new priest-king means the terminal of 'the old dispensation'- an full universe order — as 'this Birth was / Hard and acrimonious torment for us. like Death. our death' . The 'Kingdoms' mentioned are absolutely reasonable in the poem's context. but remind readers of Eliot's work of 'death's other Kingdom' and 'death's dream kingdom' .

Though explicitly Christian. 'Journey of the Magi' signifiers between the earlier and later work a span over which the reader (with entree to the Gospel word) may traverse into the release of Christianity. the new birth ; but. denied that entree. the talker of the verse form can merely seek

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alleviation in decease to get away from holding to return to the old manner in which he is ' no longer at ease' . This old manner. ' With an foreign people seizing their gods' . looks back to the barbarian universe which Eliot had been researching. the universe trapped in the rite of ' birth. and sexual intercourse. and death' . The word ' clutch' has peculiarly strong sexual intensions in Eliot's work. as when Saint Narcissus writhes ' in his ain clutch' . Eliot had criticized Wundt for disregarding sexuality's portion in faith. By ' Journey of the Magi' . nevertheless. we have birth and decease but non sexual intercourse. The reader is faced with a repudiation both of the gender bound up with crude rites and. for the minute at least. of modern gender.

Vickery overemphasizes flora mentions by associating the ' temperate vale ... smelling of vegetation' with its ' running stream' to a peculiar scene in The Golden Bough. and by take a firm standing that the ' water-mill' is that ' in which Tammuz was ground' and therefore maps as ' a reminder that decease is the monetary value of rebirth' . General intimations at birthrate ceremonials may be present. showing another continuity in subject between this and earlier poesy ; but it is of import to see that. though its decease and metempsychosis are besides related. Christianity is presented by Eliot as an flight from Frazerian rhythms of birthrate (in the manner that the Buddhist ' Shantih shantih shantih' hinted at such an flight) . non as its mere continuance.

From *The Savage and the City* in the work of T. S. Eliot. Clarendon Press. 1987. Reprinted with permission of the writer.

A. David Moody

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The first paragraph presents the item of the journey in a mode, which arrives at no vision of experience. The present participials and the paratactic sentence structure, showing one thing after another in a simple narrative, keep us to the platitudes of romantic travellers. The voice telling them is tired as if reiterating the excessively good known. Merely at the beginning and the terminal of the paragraph is at that place something to catch the attending of the modern reader, so far as he knows what the Magi did not cognize. Their 'cold coming' might propose the cold approaching Jesus himself had, as the carols now tell it. Again, 'That this was all folly' becomes a platitude Christian paradox when we know that they were seeking Christ. We are under some force per unit area to provide the significance they missed.

In the remainder of the verse form that force per unit area additions. Are the images of the in-between paragraph truly charged with cryptic significance, some 'Symbolic value, but of what we can not state, for they come to stand for the deepness of experiencing into which we can not peer'? They do hold a dream-like lucidity. At the same clip they seem to offer themselves instead readily for allegorical exegesis; the vale of life; the three crosses of Calvary; the White Horse of the Second Coming; the Judas-like universe.

The immediate enigma of the images evaporates under such reading, to be replaced by 'the Christian mystery'. The primary centripetal associations give manner to an thought, and we find we are involved in a significance beyond the Magi's existent experience. It is the same in the concluding paragraph, except that here we are confronted straight with the abstract

thought. The Magus is baffled by the evident contradictions of Birth and Death. and is left simple desiring to de cease.